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GRACE ABOUNDING

TO THE

CHIEF OF SINNERS;

OR,

A brief and faithful Relation of the exceeding Mercy of GOD in CHRIST, to his poor Servant, JOHN BUNYAN.

Wherein is particularly ſhewed,

The Manner of his Converſion, his Sight and Trouble for Sin, his dreadful Temptations; alſo how he deſpaired of God's Mercy, and how the Lord at length through Chriſt, did deliver him from all the Guilt and Terror that lay upon him.

All which was written with his own Hand, and now publiſhed for the Support of the weak and tempted People of GOD.

To which is added,

HIS DYING SAYINGS.

Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my ſoul.

Pſalm lxvi. 16.

A NEW EDITION.

LEEDS:

Printed by J. BINNS, 1798.

BRITISH MUSEUM

A

PREFACE;

OR,

A brief Account of the Publiſhing of this Work.

Written by the Author thereof; and dedicated to thoſe whom God hath accounted him worthy to beget to Faith, by his Miniſtry in the Word.

CHILDREN, Grace be with you, Amen. I being taken from you in preſence, and ſo tied up that I cannot perform that duty that from God doth lie upon me to you-ward, for your farther edifying and building up in faith, in holineſs, &c. yet, that you may ſee my ſoul hath fatherly care and deſire after your ſpiritual and everlaſting welfare, I now once again, as before from the top of *Shenir* and *Hermon*, ſo now from the *lions den, and from the mountains of the leopards* (Song iv. 8.), do yet look after you all, greatly longing to ſee your ſafe arrival in the deſired haven.

I thank God upon every remembrance of you; and rejoice, even while I ſtick between the teeth of the lions in the wilderneſs, that the grace, and mercy, and knowledge, of Chriſt our Saviour, which God hath beſtowed upon you, with abundance of faith and love; your hungering and thirſting after further acquaintance with

the Father, in the Son, your tenderneſs of heart, your trembling at ſin, your ſober and holy deportment alſo, before both God and men, is a great refreſhment to me; *for you are my glory and joy.* 1 Theſſ. ii. 20.

I have ſent you here incloſed a drop of that honey that I have taken out of the carcaſe of a lion, Judges xiv. 5, 6, 7, 8. I have eaten thereof myſelf, and am much refreſhed thereby. Temptations, when we meet them at firſt, are as the lion that roared upon Samſon; but if we overcome them, the next time we ſee them we ſhall find a neſt of honey within them. The Philiſtines underſtood me not. It is ſomething, a relation of the work of God upon my ſoul, even from the very firſt till now, wherein you may perceive my caſtings down, and riſings up; for he woundeth and his hands make whole. It is written in the ſcripture, Iſa. xxxviii. 19. *The father to the children ſhall make known the truth of God.* Yea, it was for this reaſon I lay ſo long at Sinai, Lev. iv. 10, 11, to ſee the fire, and the cloud, and darkneſs, *that I might fear the Lord all the days of my life upon earth, and tell of his wondrous works to my children*; Pſalm lxxviii. 3, 4, 5.

Moſes, Numb. xxxiii. 1, 2. writ of the journeyings of the children of Iſrael, from Egypt to the land of Canaan; and commanded alſo, that they did remember their forty years travail in the wilderneſs: *Thou ſhalt remember all the ways which the Lord thy God leads thee theſe forty years in the wilderneſs, to humble thee, and to prove thee, and to know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldſt keep his commandments or no*; Deut. viii. 2, 3. Wherefore this I have endeavoured to do; and not only ſo, but to

publiſh it alſo; that if God will, others may be put in remembrance of what he hath done for their ſouls, by reading his work upon me.

It is profitable for Chriſtians to be often calling to mind the very beginnings of grace with their ſouls: *It is a night to be much obſerved to the Lord, for bringing them out from the land of Egypt. This is that night of the Lord to be obſerved of all the children of Iſrael in their generations*; Exod. xxi. 42. *My God*, ſaith David, Pſalm xlii. 6. *my ſoul is caſt down within me; but I will remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.* He remembered alſo the lion and the bear, when he went to fight with the giant of Gath, 1 Sam. xvii. 36, 37.

It was Paul's accuſtomed manner, Acts xxii. and that when tried for his life, Acts xxiv. even to open before his judges the manner of his converſion. He would think of that day and that hour, in which he firſt did meet with grace; for he found it ſupporting him. When God had brought the children of Iſrael out of the Red Sea, far into the wilderneſs, yet they muſt turn quite about thither again, to remember the drowning of their enemies there, Numb xiv. 25. for though they ſang his praiſe before, yet they ſoon forgat his works, Pſalm cvi. 12, 13.

In this diſcourſe of mine, you may ſee much, much, I ſay, of the grace of God towards me: I thank God I can count it much; for it was above my ſins, and Satan's temptations too. I can remember my fears and doubts, and ſad months, with comfort; they are as the head of Goliah in my hand. There was nothing to David like Goliah's ſword, even that ſword that ſhould have been ſheathed in his bowels;

for the very ſight and remembrance of that did preach forth God's deliverance to him. Oh! the remembrance of my great ſins, of my great temptations, and of my great fear of periſhing for ever! They bring afreſh into my mind the remembrance of my great help, my great ſupports from heaven, and the great grace that God extendeth to ſuch a wretch as I.

My dear children, call to mind the former days, and years of ancient times: remember alſo your ſongs in the night, and commune with your own heart, Pſalm lxxiii. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. Yea, look diligently, and leave no corner therein unſearched for that treaſure hid, even the treaſure of your firſt and ſecond experience of the grace of God towards you. Remember, I ſay, the word that firſt laid hold upon you: remember alſo your terrors of conſcience, and fear of death and hell: remember alſo your tears and prayers to God; yea, how you ſighed under every hedge of mercy. Have you never a hill of Mizar to remember? Have you forgot the cloſe, the milk-houſe, the ſtable, the barn, and the like, where God did viſit your ſouls? Remember, alſo the word, the word I ſay, upon which the Lord hath cauſed you to hope. If you have ſinned againſt light, if you are tempted to blaſpheme, if you are drowned in deſpair, if you think God fights againſt you, or if heaven is hid from your eyes, remember it was thus with your father; *but out of them all the Lord delivered me.*

I could have enlarged much in this my diſcourſe, of my temptations and troubles for ſin, as alſo of the merciful kindneſs and working of God with my ſoul. I could alſo have ſtepped

into a ſtyle much higher than this in which I have here diſcourſed; and could have adorned all things more than here I have ſeemed to do: but I dare not; God did not play in tempting of me; neither did I play, when I ſunk as into a bottomleſs pit, when the *pangs of hell caught hold upon me*; wherefore I may not play in relating of them, but be plain and ſimple, and lay down the thing as it was. He that liketh it, let him receive it; and he that doth not, let him produce a better. *Farewell.*

My dear children,

The milk and honey is beyond this wilderneſs. God be merciful to you; and grant that you be not ſlothful to go in to poſſeſs the land.

JOHN BUNYAN.

GRACE

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TO THE

CHIEF of SINNERS:

OR,

A Brief Relation of the exceeding Mercy of GOD *in* CHRIST, *to his poor Servant* John Bunyan.

IN this my relation of the merciful working of God upon my ſoul, it will not be amiſs, if, in the firſt place, I do in a few words, give you an hint of my pedigree, and manner of bringing up; that thereby the goodneſs and bounty of God towards me, may be more advanced and magnified before the ſons of men.

2. For my deſcent, then, it was, as is well known by many, of a low and inconſiderable generation; my father's houſe being of that rank that is meaneſt, and moſt deſpiſed of all the families in the land. Wherefore I have not here, as others, to boaſt of noble blood, or of any highborn ſtate according to the fleſh: though all things conſidered, I magnify the heavenly Majeſty, for that by this door he brought me into the world to partake of the grace and life that is in Chriſt by the goſpel.

3. But notwithſtanding the meanneſs and inconſiderableneſs of my parents, it pleaſed God to put it in their hearts to put me to ſchool, to learn me both to read and write; the which I alſo attended, according to the rate of other poor men's children; though to my ſhame I confeſs, I did ſoon loſe that I had learned, even almoſt utterly, and that long before the Lord did work his gracious work of converſion upon my ſoul.

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4. As for my own natural life, for the time that I was without God in the world, it was indeed according to the courſe of this world, and the ſpirit that now worketh in the children of diſobedience, Eph. ii. 2, 3. It was my delight to be taken captive by the devil at his will, 2. Tim. ii. 26. being filled with all unrighteouſneſs: the which did alſo ſo ſtrongly work, and put forth itſelf both in my heart and life, and that from a child, that I had but few equals, (eſpecially conſidering my years, which were tender, being but few), both for curſing, ſwearing, lying, and blaſpheming the holy name of God.

5. Yea, ſo ſettled and rooted was I in theſe things, that they became as a ſecond nature to me; the which, as I have alſo with ſoberneſs conſidered ſince, did ſo offend the Lord, that even in my childhood he did ſcare and affrighten me with fearful dreams, and did terrify me with fearful viſions; for often, after I had ſpent this and the other day in ſin, I have in my bed been greatly afflicted, while aſleep, with the apprehenſions of devils and wicked ſpirits, who ſtill, as I then thought, laboured to draw me away with them, of which I ſhould never be rid.

6. Alſo I ſhould at theſe years, be greatly afflicted, and troubled with the thoughts of the fearful torments of hell fire; ſtill fearing that it would be my lot to be found at laſt among thoſe devils and helliſh fiends, who are there bound down with the chains of bonds and darkneſs, unto the judgment of the great day.

7. Theſe things I ſay, when I was but a child, but nine or ten years old, did ſo diſtreſs my ſoul, that then, in the midſt of my many ſports and

childish vanites, amidst my vain companions, I was often much cast down and afflicted in my mind therewith; yet could I not let go my sins. Yea, I was also then so overcome with despair of life and heaven, that I should often wish, either that there had been no hell, or that I had been a devil; supposing they were only tormentors; that if it must needs be that I went thither, I might be rather a tormentor than be tormented myself.

8. A while after these terrible dreams did leave me, which also I soon forgot; for my pleasures did quickly cut off the remembrance of them as if they had never been; wherefore, with more greediness, according to the strength of nature, I did still let loose the reins of my lust, and delighted in all transgressions against the law of God; so that, until I came to the state of marriage, I was the very ringleader of all the youth that kept me company, in all manner of vice and ungodliness.

9. Yea, such prevalency had the lusts and fruits of the flesh in this poor soul of mine, that had not a miracle of precious grace prevented, I had not only perished by the stroke of eternal justice, but had also laid myself open even to the stroke of those laws which bring some to disgrace and open shame before the face of the world.

10. In those days the thoughts of religion were very grievous to me; I could neither endure it myself, nor that any other should: so that when I have seen some read in those books that concerned Christian piety, it would be as it were a prison to me. Then I said unto God, 'Depart from me, for I desire not the know-'ledge of thy ways,' Job xxi. 14, 15. I was

now void of all good conſideration, heaven and hell were both out of ſight and mind: and as for ſaving and damning, they were leaſt in my thoughts. 'O Lord, thou knoweſt my life, 'and my ways were not hid from thee.'

11. But this I will remember, that though I could myſelf ſin, with the greateſt delight and eaſe, and alſo take pleaſure in the vileneſs of my companions; yet even then, if I had at any time ſeen wicked things done by thoſe who profeſſed godlineſs, it would make my ſpirit tremble. As once above all the reſt, when I was in the height of vanity, yet hearing one to ſwear that was reckoned for a religious man, it had ſo great a ſtroke upon my ſpirit, that it made my heart ache.

12. But God did not utterly leave me, but followed me ſtill, not with convictions, but judgments; yet ſuch as were mixed with mercy. For once I fell into a creek of the ſea, and hardly eſcaped drowning. Another time I fell out of a boat in Bedford river; but mercy yet preſerved me alive. Beſides, another time, being in the field with one of my companions, it chanced that an adder paſſed over the highway; ſo I having a ſtick in my hand, ſtruck her over the back; and having ſtunned her, I forced open her mouth with my ſtick, and plucked her ſting out with my fingers, by which act, had not God been merciful unto me, I might by my deſperateneſs, have brought myſelf to my end.

13. This alſo have I taken notice of, with thankſgiving: when I was a ſoldier, I, with others, were drawn out to go to ſuch a place to beſiege it; but when I was juſt ready to go, one of the company deſired to go in my room; to

which when I had conſented, he took my place; and coming to the ſiege, as he ſtood centinel, he was ſhot into the head with a muſket bullet, and died.

14. Here, as I ſaid, were judgments and mercy; but neither of them did awake my ſoul to righteouſneſs; wherefore I ſinned ſtill, and grew more and more rebellious againſt God, and careleſs of my own ſalvation.

15. Preſently after this, I changed my condition into a married ſtate: and my mercy was to light upon a wife whoſe father was counted godly. This woman and I, though we came together as poor as poor might be, (not having ſo much houſhold ſtuff as a diſh or ſpoon betwixt us both), yet this ſhe had for her part, The Plain-man's Path Way to Heaven, and the Practice of Piety, which her father had left her when he died. In theſe two books I would ſometimes read with her, wherein I alſo found ſome things that were ſomewhat pleaſing to me; (but all this while I met with no conviction.) She alſo would be often telling me, what a godly man her father was, and how he would reprove and correct vice, both in his houſe and among his neighbours; what a ſtrict and holy life he lived in his days, both in word and deed.

16. Wherefore theſe books, with the relation, though they did not reach my heart, to awaken it about my ſad and ſinful ſtate, yet they did beget within me ſome deſires to reform my vicious life, and fall in very eagerly with the religion of the times, to wit, to go to church twice a-day, and that too with the foremoſt; and there ſhould very devoutly both ſay and ſing, as others did; yet retaining my wicked life; but withal I

was ſo over-run with the ſpirit of ſuperſtitution, that I adored, and that with great devotion, even all things (both the high place, prieſt, clerk, veſtment, ſervice, and what elſe) belonging to the church, counting all things holy that were therein contained, and eſpecially the prieſt and clerk moſt happy, and without doubt greatly bleſſed, becauſe they were the ſervants, as I then thought, of God, and were principally in the holy temple, to do his work therein.

17. This conceit grew ſo ſtrong in a little time upon my ſpirit, that had I but ſeen a prieſt, (though never ſo ſordid and debauched in his life) I ſhould find my ſpirit fall under him, reverence him, and knit unto him; yea, I thought for the love I did bear unto them, (ſuppoſing they were the miniſters of God), I could have lain down at their feet, and have been trampled upon by them; their name, their garb, and work, did ſo intoxicate and bewitch me.

18. After I had been thus for ſome conſiderable time, another thought came into my mind: and that was, whether we were of the Iſraelites or no? For finding in the ſcriptures that they were once the peculiar people of God, thought I, if I were one of this race, my ſoul muſt needs be happy. Now, again I found within me a great longing to be reſolved about this queſtion, but could not tell how I ſhould. At laſt I aſk'd my father of it, who told me, No, we were not. Wherefore then I fell in my ſpirit as to the hopes of that, and ſo remained.

19. But all this while I was not ſenſible of the danger and evil of ſin; I was kept from conſidering that ſin would damn me, what religion,

ſoever I followed, unleſs I was found in Chriſt: nay, I never thought of him, whether there was ſuch a one or no. Thus man, when blind, doth wander, but wearieth himſelf with vanity; for he knoweth not the way to the city of God, Eccleſ. x. 15.

20. But one day, among all the ſermons our parſon made, his ſubject was, to treat of the ſabbath-day, and of the evil of breaking that, either with labour, ſports, or otherwiſe. Now I was, notwithſtanding my religion, one that took much delight in all manner of vice, and eſpecially that was the day that I did ſolace myſelf therewith, wherefore I fell in my conſcience under his ſermon, thinking and believing that he made that ſermon on purpoſe to ſhew me my evil doing. And at that time I felt what guilt was, though never before, that I can remember; but then I was, for the preſent, greatly laden therewith, and ſo went home, when the ſermon was ended, with a great burden upon my ſpirit.

21. This for that inſtant did benumb the ſinews of my beſt delights, and did imbitter my former pleaſures to me: but hold, it laſted not; for before I had well dined, the trouble began to go off my mind, and then my heart returned to its old courſe. But oh! how glad was I that this trouble was gone from me, and that the fire was put out, that I might ſin again without controul! Wherefore, when I had ſatisfied nature with my food, I ſhook the ſermon out of my mind, and to my old cuſtom of ſports and gaming I returned with great delight.

22. But the ſame day, as I was in the midſt of a game of cat, and having ſtruck it one blow

from the hole, juſt as I was about to ſtrike the ſecond time, a voice did ſuddenly dart from heaven into my ſoul, which ſaid, Wilt thou leave thy ſins and go to heaven, or have thy ſins and go to hell? At this I was put to an exceeding amaze; wherefore, leaving my cat upon the ground, I looked up to heaven, and was as if I had with the eyes of my underſtanding ſeen the Lord Jeſus looking down upon me, as being very hotly diſpleaſed with me, and as if he did ſeverely threaten me with ſome grievous puniſhment for theſe and other ungodly practices.

23. I had no ſooner thus conceived in my mind, but ſuddenly this concluſion was faſtened on my ſpirit, (for the former hint did ſet my ſins again before my face, that I had been a great and grievous ſinner, and that it was now too late for me to look after heaven; for Chriſt would not forgive me, nor pardon my tranſgreſſions. Then I fell to muſing on this alſo; and while I was thinking of it, and fearing leſt it ſhould be ſo, I felt my heart ſink in deſpair, concluding it was too late; and therefore I reſolved in my mind to go on in ſin: For, thought I, if the caſe be thus, my ſtate is ſurely miſerable: miſerable if I leave my ſins, and but miſerable if I follow them: I can but be damned; and I muſt be ſo, I had as good be damned for many as be damned for few.

24. Thus I ſtood in the midſt of my play before all that then were preſent; but yet I told them nothing: But, I ſay, having made this concluſion, I returned deſperately to my ſport again; and I well remember, that preſently this kind of deſpair did ſo poſſeſs my ſoul, that I was

perſuaded I could never attain to other comfort than what I ſhould get in ſin: for heaven was gone already, ſo that on that I muſt not think. Wherefore I found within me great deſire to take my fill of ſin, ſtill ſtudying what ſin was yet to be committed, that I might taſte the ſweetneſs of it; and I made as much haſte as I could to fill my belly with its delicates, leſt I ſhould die before I had my deſires: for that I feared greatly. In theſe things I proteſt before God, I lie not, neither do I frame this ſort of ſpeech; theſe were really, ſtrongly, and with all my heart, my deſires: The good Lord, whoſe mercy is unſearchable, forgive me my tranſgreſſions.

25. And I am very confident, that this temptation of the devil is more uſual among poor creatures than many are aware of, even to overrun the ſpirits with a ſcurvy and ſeared frame of heart, and benumbing of conſcience; which frame he ſtilly and ſlily ſupplieth with ſuch deſpair, that though not much guilt attended fouls, yet they continually have a ſecret concluſion within them, that there is no hope for them; for they have loved ſins, therefore after them they will go, Jer. ii. 25. and xviii. 12.

26. Now therefore I went on in ſin with great greedineſs of mind, ſtill grudging that I could not be ſatisfied with it as I would. This did continue with me about a month or more; but one day, as I was ſtanding at a neighbour's ſhop-window, and there curſing and ſwearing, and playing the madman, after my wonted manner, there ſat within the woman of the houſe, and heard me; who, though ſhe was a very looſe and ungodly wretch, yet proteſted

that I ſwore and curſed at that moſt fearful rate, that ſhe was made to tremble to hear me; and told me further, that I was the ungodlieſt fellow for ſwearing that ever ſhe heard in all her life; and that I by thus doing, was able to ſpoil all the youth in the whole town, if they came but in my company.

27. At this reproof I was ſilenced, and put to ſecret ſhame, and that too, as I thought, before the God of heaven; wherefore, while I ſtood there and hanging down my head, I wiſhed with all my heart that I might be a little child again, that my father might learn me to ſpeak without this wicked way of ſwearing; for, thought I, I am ſo accuſtomed to it, that it is in vain for me to think of a reformation, for I thought it could never be.

28. But how it came to paſs I know not, I did from this time forward ſo leave my ſwearing, that it was a great wonder to myſelf to obſerve it; and whereas before I knew not how to ſpeak unleſs I put an oath before, and another behind, to make my words have authority, now I could, without it, ſpeak better, and with more pleaſantneſs, than ever I could before. All this while I knew not Jeſus Chriſt; neither did I leave my ſports and plays.

29. But quickly after this I fell in company with one poor man that made profeſſion of religion, who, as I then thought, did talk pleaſantly of the ſcriptures, and of the matter of religion; wherefore falling into ſome love and liking to what he ſaid, I betook me to my bible, and began to take great pleaſure in reading, but eſpecially with the hiſtorical part thereof: for as

for Paul's epiſtles, and ſuch like ſcriptures, I could not away with them, being as yet ignorant, either of the corruptions of my nature, or of the want and worth of Jeſus Chriſt to ſave us.

30. Wherefore I fell to ſome outward reformation, both in my words and life, and did ſet the commandments before me for my way to heaven; which commandments I alſo did ſtrive to keep, and, as I thought, did keep them pretty well ſometimes, and then I ſhould have comfort; yet now and then I ſhould break one, and ſo afflict my conſcience; but then I ſhould repent, and ſay, I was ſorry for it, and promiſe God to do better next time, and there get help again; for then I thought I pleaſed God as well as any man in England.

31. Thus I continued about a year; all which time our neighbours did take me to be a very godly man, a new and religious man, and did marvel much to ſee ſuch a great and famous alteration in my life and manners: and indeed ſo it was, though yet I knew not Chriſt, nor grace, nor faith, nor hope; for, as I have well ſeen ſince, had I then died, my ſtate had been moſt fearful.

32. But, I ſay, my neighbours were amazed at this my great converſion, from prodigious profaneneſs to ſomething like a moral life: and truly ſo they well might; for this my converſion was as great as for Tom of Bethlehem to become a ſober man. Now therefore they began to praiſe, to commend, and to ſpeak well of me, both to my face and behind my back. Now I was, as they ſaid, become godly; now I was become a right honeſt man. But oh! when I

underſtood thoſe were their words and opinions of me, it pleaſed me mighty well. For though as yet I was nothing but a poor painted hypocrite, yet I loved to be talked of as one that was truly godly. I was proud of my godlineſs: and indeed I did all I did, either to be ſeen of, or to be well ſpoken of by men: And thus I continued for about a twelvemonth, or more.

33. Now you muſt know, that before this I had taken much delight in ringing; but my conſcience beginning to be tender, I thought ſuch practice was but vain; and therefore forced myſelf to leave it: yet my mind hankered: wherefore I ſhould go to the ſteeple-houſe, and look on, though I durſt not ring. But I thought this did not become religion neither; yet I forced myſelf, and would look on ſtill. But quickly after I began to think, How if one of the bells ſhould fall? Then I choſe to ſtand under a mean beam, that lay overthwart the ſteeple, from ſide to ſide, thinking here I might ſtand ſure; but then I thought again, ſhould the bell fall with a ſwing, it might firſt hit the wall, and then rebounding upon me, might kill me for all this beam. This made me ſtand in the ſteeple door; and now, thought I, I am ſafe enough; for if the bell ſhould then fall, I can ſlip out behind theſe thick walls, and ſo be preſerved notwithſtanding.

34. So after this I would yet go to ſee them ring, but would not go farther than the ſteeple-door; but then it came into my head, How if the ſteeple itſelf ſhould fall? And this thought, (it may for ought I know), when I ſtood and looked on, did continually ſo ſhake my mind, that I durſt not ſtand at the ſteeple door any

longer, but was forced to flee, for fear the ſteeple ſhould fall upon my head.

35. Another thing was, my dancing, I was a full year before I could quite leave that; but all this while when I thought I kept this or that commandment, or did, by word or deed, any thing that I thought was good, I had great peace in my conſcience, and ſhould think with myſelf, God cannot chuſe but be now pleaſed with me; yea, to relate it in mine own way, I thought no man in England could pleaſe God better than I.

36. But poor wretch as I was, I was all this while ignorant of Jeſus Chriſt; and going about to eſtabliſh my own righteouſneſs; and had periſhed therein, had not God, in mercy, ſhewed me more of my ſtate of nature.

37. But upon a day, the good providence of God called me to Bedford, to work on my calling; and in one of the ſtreets of that town, I came where there were three or four poor women ſitting, at a door in the ſun, talking about the things of God; and being now willing to hear their diſcourſe, I drew near to hear what they ſaid; for I was now a briſk talker myſelf, in the matters of religion. But I may ſay, I heard but underſtood not; for they were far above out of reach. Their talk was about a new birth, the work of God on their hearts; as alſo how they were convinced of their miſerable ſtate by nature: They talked how God had viſited their ſouls with his love in the Lord Jeſus, and with what words and promiſes they had been refreſhed, comforted, and ſupported againſt the temptations of the devil. Moreover, they reaſoned of the ſuggeſtions and

temptations of Satan in particular, and told to each other by which they had been afflicted, and how they were borne up under his assaults. They also discourſed of their own wretchedneſs of heart; of their unbelief: and did contemn, ſlight, and abhor their own righteouſneſs, as filthy and inſufficient to do them any good.

38. And methought they ſpake as if you did make them ſpeak; they ſpake with ſuch pleaſantneſs of ſcripture language, and with ſuch appearance of grace in all they ſaid, that they were to me as if they had found a new world; as if they were 'people that dwelt alone, and 'were not to be reckoned among their neigh-'bours.' Numb. xxiii. 9.,

39. At this I felt my own heart begin to ſhake and miſtruſt my condition to be naught; for I ſaw that in all my thoughts about religion and ſalvation, the new birth did never enter into my mind, neither knew I the comfort of the word and promiſe, nor the deceitfulneſs and treachery of my own wicked heart. As for ſecret thoughts, I took no notice of them; neither did I underſtand what Satan's temptations were, nor how they were to be withſtood and reſiſted, &c.

40. Thus, therefore, when I had heard and conſidered what they ſaid, I left them, and went about my employment again; but their talk and diſcourſe went with me; alſo my heart would tarry with them; for I was greatly affected with their words, both becauſe by them I was convinced that I wanted the true tokens of a truly godly man, and alſo becauſe by them I was convinced of the happy and bleſſed condition of him that was ſuch a one.

41. Therefore I ſhould often make it my buſineſs, to be going again and again into the company of theſe poor people: for I could not ſtay away; and the more I went among them, the more I did queſtion my condition; and, as I ſtill remember, preſently I found two things within me, at which I did ſometimes marvel, eſpecially conſidering what a blind, ignorant, ſordid and ungodly wretch but juſt before I was): the one was a very great ſoftneſs and tenderneſs of heart, which cauſed me to fall under the conviction of what by ſcripture they aſſerted; and the other was a great bending in my mind to a continual meditating on it, and on all [illegible] good things which at any time I heard or read of.

42. By theſe things my mind was now ſo turned, that it lay like an horſeleech at the vein, ſtill crying out, 'Give, give.' Pro. xxx. 15. which was ſo fixed on eternity, and on the things about the kingdom of heaven, (that is, ſo far as I knew, though, as yet, God knows I knew but little) that neither pleaſures, nor profits, nor perſuaſions, nor threats, could looſe it, or make it let go its hold; and though I may ſpeak it with ſhame, yet it is in very deed a certain truth, it would then have been as difficult to me to have taken my mind from heaven to earth, as I have found it often ſince to get again from earth to heaven.

43. One thing I may not omit: There was a young man in our town, to whom my heart before was knit more than to any other, but he being a moſt wicked creature for curſing and ſwearing, and whoring, I now ſhook him off, and forſook his company: but about a quarter

of a year after I had left him, I met him in a certain lane, and aſked him how he did? He, after his old ſwearing and mad way, anſwered, He was well. "But, Harry, ſaid I, "why do you ſwear and curſe thus? What "will become of you if you die in this condi- "tion?" He anſwered me in a great chafe, "What would the devil do for company, if "it were not for ſuch as I am?"

44. About this time I met with ſome ranters books, that were put forth by ſome of our countrymen; which books were alſo highly in eſteem by ſeveral old profeſſors. Some of theſe I read, but was not able to make a judgment about them; wherefore, as I read in them, and thought upon them, ſeeing myſelf unable to judge, I ſhould betake myſelf to hearty prayer in this manner: "O Lord, I am a "fool, and not able to know the truth from "error: Lord, leave me not to my own blind- "neſs, either to approve of or condemn this "doctrine; if it be of God, let me not deſpiſe "it; if it be of the devil, let me not embrace "it. Lord, I lay my ſoul in this matter only "at thy foot; let me not be deceived, I hum- "bly beſeech thee." I had one religious intimate companion all this while, and that was the poor man I ſpoke of before; but about this time he alſo turned a moſt deviliſh ranter, and gave himſelf up to all manner of filthineſs, eſpecially uncleanneſs. He would alſo deny that there was a God, angel, or ſpirit; and would laugh at all exhortations to ſobriety. When I laboured to rebuke his wickedneſs, he would laugh the more, and pretend that he had gone through all religions, and could never light on

the right till now. He told me alſo, that in a little time I ſhould ſee all profeſſors turn to the way of the ranters. Wherefore, abominating theſe curſed principles, I left his company forwith, and became to him as great a ſtranger as I had been before a familiar.

45. Neither was this man only a temptation to me, but my calling lying in the country, I happened to light into ſeveral peoples' company, who, though ſtrict in religion formerly, yet were alſo ſwept away by theſe ranters. Theſe would alſo talk with me of their ways, and condemn me as legal and dark; pretending that they had only attained to perfection, that could do what they would and not ſin. Oh! theſe temptations were ſuitable to my fleſh, I being but a young man and my nature in its prime; but God, who had, as I hope, deſigned me for better things, kept me in the fear of his name, and did not ſuffer me to accept ſuch curſed principles. And bleſſed be God, who put it in my heart to cry to him to be kept and directed, ſtill diſtruſting mine own wiſdom; for I have ſince ſeen even the effects of that prayer, in preſerving me not only from ranting error, but from thoſe alſo that have ſprung up ſince. The Bible was precious to me in theſe days.

46. And now methought I began to look into the Bible with new eyes, and read as I never did before; and eſpecially the epiſtles of the apoſtle St. Paul were ſweet and pleaſant to me; and indeed then I was never out of the Bible either by reading or meditation: ſtill crying out to God, that a might know the truth, and way to heaven and glory.

47. And as I went on and read, I lighted on that paſſage, 'To one it is given by the Spirit 'the word of wiſdom; to another the word of 'knowledge by the ſame Spirit, and to ano-'ther faith,' &c. 1 *Cor.* xii. And though, as I have ſince ſeen, that by this ſcripture the Holy Ghoſt intends, in ſpecial, things extra-ordinary, yet on me it did then faſten with conviction, that I did want things ordinary, even that underſtanding and wiſdom that other Chriſtians had. On this word I muſed, and could not tell what to do; eſpecially this word, Faith, put me to it; for I could not help it, but ſometimes muſt queſtion, whether I had any faith or no: but I was loath to conclude I had no faith; for if I do ſo, thought I, then I count myſelf a very caſt-away indeed.

48. No, ſaid I with myſelf, though I am convinced that I am an ignorant ſot, and that I want thoſe bleſſed gifts of knowledge and underſtanding that other people have; yet, at venture, I will conclude I am not altogether faithleſs, though I know not what faith is: for it was ſhewn me, and that too (as I have ſeen ſince) by Satan, that thoſe who conclude themſelves in a faithleſs ſtate, have neither reſt nor quiet in their ſouls: and I was loth to fall quite into deſpair.

49. Wherefore, by this ſuggeſtion, I was for a while made afraid to ſee my want of faith: but God would not ſuffer me thus to undo and deſtroy my ſoul, but did continually, againſt this my ſad and blind concluſion, create ſtill within me ſuch ſuppoſitions, inſomuch that I could not reſt content, until I did now come

to ſome certain knowledge, whether I had faith or no; this always running in my mind, 'But how if you want faith indeed? But how 'can you tell you have faith?' And beſides, I ſaw for certain, if I had not, I was ſure to periſh for ever.

50. So that though I endured at the firſt to look over the buſineſs of faith, yet, in a little time, I better conſidering the matter, was willing to put myſelf upon the trial whether I had faith or no. But, alas! poor wretch, ſo ignorant and brutiſh was I, that I knew to this day no more how to do it, than I knew how to begin and accompliſh that rare and curious piece of art, which I never yet ſaw or conſidered.

51. Wherefore, while I was thus conſidering, and being put to my plunge about it, (for you muſt know, that as yet I had, in this matter, broken my mind to no man, only did hear and conſider), the tempter came in with his deluſion, 'That there was no way for me to 'know I had faith, but by trying to work ſome 'miracles;' urging thoſe ſcriptures that ſeem to look that way, for the inforcing and ſtrengthening his temptation. Nay, one day, as I was between Elſtow and Bedford, the temptation was hot upon me, to try if I had faith, by doing ſome miracle: which miracle at this time was this, I muſt ſay to the puddles that were in the horſepads, 'Be dry;' and to the dry places, 'Be you puddles.' And truly one time I was going to ſay ſo indeed; but juſt as I was about to ſpeak, this thought came into my mind, 'But go under yonder hedge, and pray 'firſt that God would make you able.' But

when I had concluded to pray, this came hot upon me, That if I prayed, and came again and tried to do it, and yet did nothing notwithſtanding, then be ſure I had no faith, but was a caſt-away and loſt. Nay, thought I, if it be ſo, I will not try yet, but will ſtay a little longer.

52. So I continued at a great loſs, for I thought, if they only had faith which could do ſo wonderful things, then I concluded that for the preſent I neither had it, nor yet for time to come were ever like to have it. Thus I was toſſed between the devil and my own ignorance, and perplexed, eſpecially at ſome times, that I could not tell what to do.

53. About this time the ſtate and happineſs of theſe poor people at Bedford was thus, in a kind of a viſion, preſented to me, I ſaw, as if they were on the ſunny ſide of ſome high mountain, there refreſhing themſelves with the pleaſant beams of the ſun, while I was ſhivering and ſhrinking in the cold, afflicted with froſt, ſnow, and dark clouds: methought alſo, betwixt me and them I ſaw a wall that did compaſs about this mountain; now through this wall my ſoul did greatly deſire to paſs, concluding, that if I could, I would even go into the very midſt of them, and there alſo comfort myſelf with the heat of their ſun.

54. About this wall I thought myſelf to go again and again, ſtill prying as I went, to ſee if I could find ſome way or paſſage, by which I might enter therein. But none could I find for ſome time. At the laſt I ſaw, as it were, a narrow gap, like a little door-way in the wall,

through which I attempted to paſs: now the paſſage being very ſtraight and narrow, I made many offers to get in, but all in vain, even until I was well nigh quite beat out, by ſtriving to get in. At laſt, with great ſtriving, methought I at firſt did get in my head, and after that by a ſidling ſtriving, my ſhoulders, and my whole body. Then was I exceeding glad, went and ſat down in the midſt of them, and ſo was comforted with the light and heat of their ſun.

55. Now this mountain and wall, &c. was thus made out to me: The mountain ſignified the church of the living God; the ſun that ſhone thereon, the comfortable ſhining of his merciful face on them that were therein; the wall I thought was the world, that did make ſeparation between the Chriſtians and the world; and the gap which was in the wall I thought was Jeſus Chriſt, who is the way to God the Father, *John* xiv. 6. *Matt.* vii. 14. But foraſmuch as the paſſage was wonderful narrow, even ſo narrow that I could not, but with great difficulty, enter in thereat, it ſhewed me none could enter into life, but thoſe that were in downright earneſt, and unleſs alſo they left that wicked world behind them; for here was only room for body and ſoul, but not for body and ſoul and ſin.

56. This reſemblance abode upon my ſpirit many days; all which time I ſaw myſelf in a forlorn and ſad condition, but yet was provoked to a vehement hunger and deſire to be one of that number that did ſit in the ſunſhine: now alſo ſhould I pray wherever I was, whether

at home or abroad, in houſe or field; and would alſo often, with lifting up of heart, ſing that of the fifty-firſt pſalm, 'Lord, conſider 'my diſtreſs;' for as yet I knew not where it was.

57. Neither as yet could I attain to any comfortable perſuaſion that I had faith in Chriſt; but inſtead of having ſatisfaction, here I began to find my ſoul to be aſſaulted with freſh doubts about my future happineſs; eſpecially with ſuch as theſe, 'Whether I was elected? 'But how if the day of grace ſhall now be paſt 'and gone?'

58. By theſe two temptations I was very much affected and diſquieted; ſometimes by one, and ſometimes by the other of them. And firſt, to ſpeak of that about my queſtioning my election, I found at this time, that though I was in a flame to find the way to heaven and glory, and thought nothing could beat me off from this; yet this queſtion did ſo offend and diſcourage me, that I was, eſpecially ſometimes, as if the very ſtrength of my body alſo had been taken away by the force and power thereof. This ſcripture did alſo ſeem to me to trample upon all my deſires. 'It is neither in him 'that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in 'God that ſheweth mercy,' *Rom.* ix.

59. With this ſcripture I could not tell what to do; for I evidently ſaw unleſs that the great God, of his infinite grace and bounty, had voluntarily choſen me to be a veſſel of mercy, though I ſhould deſire, and long, and labour, until my heart did break, no good could come of it. Therefore this would ſtick with me,

'How can you tell that you are elected? And 'what if you ſhould not? How then?'

60. O Lord, thought I, what if I ſhould not indeed? It may be you are not, ſaid the tempter: it may be ſo indeed, thought I. Why then, ſaid Satan, you had as good leave off and ſtrive no farther; for if indeed you ſhould not be elected and choſen of God, there is no talk of your being ſaved: 'For it is neither in him 'that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but 'in God that ſheweth mercy.'

61. By theſe things I was driven to my wits end, not knowing what to ſay, or how to anſwer theſe temptations. Indeed I little thought that Satan had thus aſſaulted me, but that rather it was my own prudence, thus to ſtart the queſtion; for that the elect only obtained eternal life; that I, without ſcruple, did heartily cloſe withal; but that myſelf was one of them, there lay the queſtion.

62. Thus, therefore, for ſeveral days, I was greatly aſſaulted and perplexed; and was often, when I have been walking, ready to ſink where I went, with faintneſs in my mind. But one day, after I had been ſo many weeks oppreſſed and caſt down therewith, as I was now quite giving up the ghoſt of all my hopes of ever attaining life, that ſentence fell with weight upon my ſpirit, 'Look at the generations of 'old, and ſee; did ever any truſt in God, and 'were confounded?'

63. At which I was greatly enlightened, and encouraged in my ſoul; for thus at that very inſtant, it was expounded to me: 'Begin at 'the beginning of Geneſis, and read to the 'end of the Revelations, and ſee if you can

'find that there was ever any that truſted in 'the Lord, and was confounded.' So coming home, I preſently went to my Bible, to ſee if I could find that ſaying, not doubting but to find it preſently; for it was ſo freſh, and with ſuch ſtrength and comfort on my ſpirit, that it was as if it talked with me.

64. Well, I looked; but I found it not; only it abode upon me. Then did I aſk, firſt this good man, and then another, if they knew where it was: but they knew no ſuch place. At this I wondered, that ſuch a ſentence ſhould ſo ſuddenly, and with ſuch comfort and ſtrength, ſtrength, ſeize and abide upon my heart, and yet that none could find it, for I doubted not but it was in holy ſcripture.

65. Thus I continued above a year, and could not find the place: but at laſt caſting my eye upon the Apocrypha books, I found it in Eccleſiaſticus, Eccleſ. ii. 10. This, at the firſt, did ſomewhat daunt me; but becauſe by this time I had got more experience of the love and kindneſs of God, it troubled me the leſs; eſpecially when I conſidered, that though it was not in thoſe texts that we call holy and canonical, yet foraſmuch as this ſentence was the ſum and ſubſtance of many of the promiſes, it was my duty to take the comfort of it, and I bleſs God for that word, for it was of good to me: that word doth ſtill oft-times ſhine before my face.

66. After this, that other doubt did come with ſtrength upon me, 'But how if the day of grace ſhould be paſſed and gone?' How, if you have overſtood the time of mercy; Now I remember that one day, as I was walking in

the country, I was much in the thoughts of this, 'But how if the day of grace is paſſed?' And to aggravate my trouble, the tempter preſented to my mind theſe good people at Bedford, and ſuggeſted thus unto me, That theſe being converted already, they were all that God would ſave in thoſe parts; and that I came too late, for theſe had got the bleſſing before I came.

67. Now I was in great diſtreſs, thinking in very deed that this might well be ſo; wherefore I went up and down bemoaning my ſad condition; counting myſelf far worſe than a thouſand fools, for ſtanding off thus long and ſpending ſo many years in ſin as I had done; ſtill crying out, O that I had turned ſooner; Oh, that I had turned ſeven years ago! It made me alſo angry with myſelf to think that I ſhould have no more wit, but to trifle away my time till my ſoul and heaven were loſt.

68. But when I had been long vexed with this fear, and was ſcarce able to take one ſtep more, juſt about the ſame place where I received my other encouragement, theſe words broke in upon my mind, 'Compel them to 'come in, that my houſe may be filled;—and 'yet there is room,' Luke xiv. 22, 23. Theſe words, but eſpecially them, 'and yet there is 'room,' were ſweet words to me; for truly I thought that by them I ſaw there was place enough in heaven for me; and moreover, that when the Lord Jeſus did ſpeak theſe words, he then did think of me; and that he knowing that the time would come, that I ſhould be afflicted with fear that there was no place left for me in his boſom, did beſpeak this word and

leave it upon record, that I might find help thereby againſt this vile temptation. This I then verily believed.

69. In the light and encouragement of this word I went a pretty while, and the comfort was the more, when I thought that the Lord Jeſus ſhould think on me ſo long ago, and that he ſhould ſpeak them words on purpoſe for my ſake; for I did think verily, that he did on purpoſe ſpeak them, to encourage me withal.

70. But I was not without my temptations to go back again; temptations, I ſay, both from Satan, mine own heart, and carnal acquaintance: but I thank God theſe were outweighed by that ſound ſenſe of death, and of the day of judgment, which abode as it were continually in my view. I ſhould alſo often think on Nebuchadnezzar; of whom it is ſaid, 'He had given him all the kingdoms of the earth,' Dan. v. 18, 19. Yet, thought I, if this great man had all his portion in this world, one hour in hell-fire would make him forget all. Which conſideration was a great help to me.

71. I was almoſt made, about this time, to ſee ſomething concerning the beaſts that Moſes counted clean and unclean: I thought thoſe beaſts were types of men; the clean, types of them that were the people of God; but the unclean, types of ſuch as were the children of the wicked one. Now, I read, that the clean beaſts 'chewed the cud;' that is, thought I, they ſhew us, we muſt feed upon the word of God: they alſo 'parted the hoof;' I thought that ſignified, we muſt part, if we would be ſaved, with the ways of ungodly men. And alſo in further reading about them, I found, that though we

did chew the cud, as the hare; yet if we walked with claws like a dog: or if we did part the hoof, like the ſwine, yet if we did not chew the cud, as the ſheep, we are ſtill, for all that, but unclean; for I thought the hare to be a type of thoſe that talk of the word, yet walk in the ways of ſin; and that the ſwine was like him that parted with his outward pollution, but ſtill wanted the word of faith, without which there would be no way of ſalvation, let a man be never ſo devout, *Deut.* xiv. After this I found by reading the word, that thoſe that muſt be glorified with Chriſt in another world, 'muſt be called by him here;' called to the partaking of a ſhare in his word and righteouſneſs, and to the comforts and firſt-fruits of his Spirit, and to a peculiar intereſt in all thoſe heavenly things, which do indeed forfeit the ſoul for that reſt, and houſe of glory, which is in heaven above.

72. Here again I was at a very great ſtand, not knowing what to do, fearing I was not called; for, thought I, if I be not called, what then can do me good? None but theſe who are effectually called inherit the kingdom of heaven. But oh! how I now loved thoſe words that ſpake of a Chriſtian's calling!' as when the Lord ſaid to one, 'Follow me,' and to another, 'Come after me;' and oh! thought I that he would ſay ſo to me too, how gladly would I run after him!

73. I cannot now expreſs with what longings and breathings in my ſoul, I cried to Chriſt to call me. Thus I continued for a time, almoſt on a flame to be converted to Jeſus Chriſt and did alſo ſee at that day, ſuch glory in a con

verted ſtate, that I could not be converted without a ſhare therein. Gold! could it have been gotten for gold, what could I have given for it! Had I a whole world it had gone ten thouſand times over for this, that my ſoul might have been in a converted ſtate.

74. How lovely now was every one in my eyes that I thought to be converted men and women! They ſhone, they walked like a people that carried the broad ſeal of heaven about them. Oh! I ſaw the lot was fallen to them in pleaſant places and they had a goodly heritage, *Pſalm* xvi. But that which made me ſick, was that of Chriſt, in Mark, 'He went 'up into a mountain, and called to him 'whom he would, and they came unto him,' *Mark* iii. 13.

75. This ſcripture made me faint and fear; yet it kindled fire in my ſoul. That which made me fear was this, leſt Chriſt ſhould have no liking to me, for he called whom he would. But Oh! the glory that I ſaw in that condition, did ſtill ſo engage my heart, that I could ſeldom read of any that Chriſt did call, but I preſently wiſhed, 'Would I had been in their 'cloths; would I had been born Peter; would 'I had been born John; or would I had been 'by, and had heard him when he called them; 'how would I have cried, O Lord, call me 'alſo! But oh! I feared he would not call 'me.'

76. And truly the Lord let me go thus many months together, and ſhewed me nothing, either that I was already, or ſhould be called hereafter. But at laſt, after much time ſpent, and many groans to God, that I might be made

a partaker of the holy and heavenly calling, that word came in upon me, 'I will cleanſe their 'blood that I have not cleanſed, for the Lord 'dwelleth in Zion,' *Joel* iii. 21. Theſe words I thought were ſent to encourage me to wait ſtill upon God; and ſignified unto me, that if I were not already, yet time might come I might be in truth converted unto Chriſt.

77. About this time I began to break my mind to thoſe poor people in Bedford, and to tell them my condition; which when they had heard, they told Mr. Gifford of me; who himſelf alſo took occaſion to talk with me, and was willing to be well perſuaded of me, though I think from little grounds: but he invited me to his houſe. where I ſhould hear him confer with others, about the dealing of God with their ſouls. From all which I ſtill received more conviction; and from that time began to ſee ſomething of the vanity and inward wretchedneſs of my wicked heart; for as yet I knew no great matter therein; but now it began to be diſcovered unto me, and alſo to work at that rate as it never did before. Now I evidently found, that luſts and corruptions put forth themſelves within me, in wicked thoughts and deſires, which I did not regard before: my deſires, alſo for heaven and life bgan to fail: I found alſo, that whereas before my ſoul was full of longing after God, now it began to hanker after every fooliſh vanity; yea, my heart would not be moved to mind that which was good; it began to be careleſs, both of my ſoul and heaven; it would now continually hang back, both to and in every duty; and was as a clog on the leg of a bird, to hinder me from flying.

78. Nay, thought I, now I grow worſe and worſe; now I am farther from converſion than ever I was before: wherefore I began to ſink greatly in my ſoul, and began to entertain ſuch diſcouragement in my heart, as laid me as low as hell. If now I ſhould have burned at the ſtake, I could not believe that Chriſt had a love for me: alas! I could neither hear him, nor ſee him, nor feel him, nor ſavour any of his things: I was driven as with a tempeſt; my heart would be unclean, and the Canaanites would dwell in the land.

79. Sometimes I would tell my condition to the people of God; which when they heard they would pity me, and would tell me of the promiſes; but they had as good have told me, that I muſt reach the ſun with my finger, as have bidden me receive or rely upon the promiſes; and as ſoon as I ſhould have done it, all my ſenſe and feeling was againſt me; and I ſaw I had a heart that would ſin, and that lay under a law that would condemn.

80. Theſe things have often made me think of the child which the father brought to Chriſt, 'who, while he was yet a coming to him, was 'thrown down by the devil, and alſo ſo rent 'and torn by him, that he lay and wallowed, 'foaming,' *Luke* ix. 42. *Mark* ix. 20.

81. Further, in theſe days, I ſhould find my heart to ſhut itſelf up againſt the Lord, and againſt his holy word: I have found my unbelief to ſet, as it were the ſhoulder to the door, to keep him out; and that too even then, when I have, with many a bitter ſigh, cried, 'Good Lord, break it open; Lord, break

'these gates of brass, and cut these bars of 'iron asunder,' *Psalm* cxii. 16. Yet that word would sometimes create in my heart a peaceable pause, 'I girded thee, though thou 'hast not known me,' *Isa.* xlv. 5.

82. But all this while, as to the act of sining, I never was more tender than now: I durst not take a pin or stick, though but so big as a straw; for my conscience now was sore, and would smart at every touch: I could not tell how to speak my words for fear I should misplace them. Oh! how gingerly did I then go, in all I did or said! I found myself as on a miry bog, that shook if I did but stir; and was as there left both of God and Christ, and the Spirit, and all good things.

83. But observe, though I was such a great sinner before conversion, yet God never much charged the guilt of the sin of my ignorance upon me; only he shewed me, I was lost if I had not Christ, because I had been a sinner; I saw that I wanted a perfect righteousness to present me without fault before God; and this righteousness was no where to be found, but in the person of Jesus Christ.

84. But my original and inward pollution, that, that was my plague and affliction; that I saw at a dreadful rate, always putting forth itself within me; that I had the guilt of to amazement; by reason of that, I was more loathsome in mine own eyes than was a toad; and I thought I was so in God's eyes too. Sin and corruption, I said, would as naturally bubble out of my heart, as water would bubble out of a fountain: I thought now that every one had a better heart than I had: I could have

changed heart with any body; I thought none but the devil himself could equalize me for inward wickedness and pollution of mind. I fell therefore at the sight of my own vileness, deeply into despair; for I concluded that this condition that I was in could not stand with a state of grace. Sure, thought I, I am forsaken of God; sure I am given up to the devil, and to a reprobate mind: and thus I continued a long while, even for some years together.

85. While I was thus afflicted with the fears of my own damnation, there were two things would make me wonder: the one was, when I saw old people hunting after the things of this life, as if they should live here always: the other was, when I found professors much distressed and cast down, when they met with outward losses: as of husband, wife, child, &c. Lord, thought I, what ado is here about such little things as these! What seeking after carnal things by some, and what grief in others for the loss of them! If they so much labour after, and shed so many tears for the things of this present life, how am I to be bemoaned, pitied, and prayed for! My soul is dying, my soul is damning. Were my soul but in a good condition, and were I but sure of it, ah! how rich would I esteem myself, though blessed with bread and water! I should count those but small afflictions, and should bear them as little burthens. 'A wounded spirit, who can bear?'

86. And though I was much troubled, and tossed, and afflicted, with the sight, and sense, and terror of my own wickedness; yet I was

afraid to let this ſight and ſenſe go quite off the right way, that is, by the blood of Chriſt, a man grew rather worſe for the loſs of his trouble of mind, than trouble. Wherefore, if my guilt lay hard upon me, then ſhould I cry, that the blood of Chriſt might take it off: and if it was going off without it, (for the ſenſe of ſin would be ſometimes as if it would die and go quite away) then I would alſo ſtrive to fetch it upon my heart again, by bringing the puniſhment of ſin into hell-fire upon my ſpirits; and ſhould cry, 'Lord, let it not go off my heart, 'but the right way, by the blood of Chriſt, and 'the application of thy mercy, through him, 'to my ſoul;' for the ſcripture did lay much upon me, 'Without ſhedding of blood there 'is no redemption,' *Heb.* xii. And that which made me the more afraid of this was, becauſe I had ſeen ſome, who, though when they were under wounds of conſcience, would cry and pray, yet, feeling rather preſent eaſe for their trouble, than pardon for their ſin, cared not how they loſt their guilt, ſo they got it out of their mind: now having got it off the wrong way, it was not ſanctified unto them; but they grew harder and blinder, and more wicked after their trouble. This made me afraid, and made me cry to God the more, that it might not be ſo with me.

87. And now I was ſorry that God had made me a man, for I feared I was a reprobate: I counted man, as unconverted, the moſt doleful of all creatures. Thus being afflicted and toſſed about my ſad condition, I counted myſelf alone, and above the moſt of men, unbleſſed.

88. Yea, I thought it impoſſible that ever I

ſhould attain to ſo much godlineſs of heart, as to thank God that he had made me a man. Man indeed is the moſt noble, by creation, of all creatures in the viſible world; but by ſin he hath made himſelf moſt ignoble. The beaſts, birds, fiſhes, &c. I bleſſed their condition: for they had not a ſinful nature; they were not obnoxious to the wrath of God; they were not to go to hell-fire after death: I could therefore have rejoiced had my condition been as any of theirs.

89. In this condition I went a great while; but when comforting time was come, I heard one preach a ſermon on theſe words in the Song, (Song iv. 2.) 'Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair;' but at that time he made theſe two words, My Love, his chief and ſubject matter. From which, after he had a little opened the text, he obſerved theſe ſeveral concluſions: '1. That the church, 'and ſo every ſaved ſoul, is Chriſt's love, when 'loveleſs. 2. Chriſt's love without a cauſe. '3. Chriſt's love, which hath been hated of the 'world. 4. Chriſt's love, when under temp-'tation, and under diſtraction. 5. Chriſt's love 'from firſt to laſt.'

90. But I got nothing by what he had ſaid at preſent; only when he came to the application of the fourth particular, this was the word he ſaid, 'If it be ſo, that the ſaved ſoul is Chriſt's 'love when under temptation and diſtraction, 'then, poor tempted ſoul, when thou art 'aſſaulted and afflicted with temptations, and 'the hidings of God's face, yet think on theſe 'two words, My love, ſtill.'

91. So as I was going home, these words came again into my thoughts, and I well remember, as they came in, I said thus in my heart, 'What shall I get by thinking on these 'two words?' This thought had no sooner passed through my heart, but these words began thus to kindle in my spirit, 'Thou art my 'love, thou art my dove,' twenty times together: and still as they ran in my mind, they waxed stronger and warmer, and began to make me look up. But being as yet between hope and fear, I still replied in my heart, 'But it is 'true, but it is true;' at which that sentence fell upon me, 'He wist not that it was true 'which was come unto him of the angel,' *Acts* xii. 9.

92. Then I began to give place to the word: which, with power, did over and over make this joyful sound within my soul: 'Thou art 'my love, thou art my love; and nothing 'shall separate thee from my love.' And with that my heart was filled full of comfort and hope; and now I could believe that my sins should be forgiven me: yea, I was now so taken with the love and mercy of God, that I remember I could not tell how to contain till I got home: I thought I could have spoken of his love, and have told of his mercy to me, even to the very crows that sat upon the ploughed lands before me, had they been capable to have understood me: wherefore I said in my soul, with much gladness, Well, I would I had a pen and ink here, I would write this down before I go any farther; for surely I will not forget this forty years hence. But alas! within less than forty days I began to question all

again; which made me begin to queſtion all ſtill.

93. Yet ſtill at times I was helped to believe, that it was a true manifeſtation of grace unto my ſoul, though I had loſt much of the life and ſavour of it. Now about a week or fortnight after this, I was much followed by this ſcripture, 'Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath de-'ſired to have you.' *Luke* xxii. 31. And ſometimes it would ſound ſo loud within me, yea, and, as it were, call ſo ſtrongly after me, that once, above all the reſt, I turned my head over my ſhoulder, thinking verily that ſome man had, behind me, called me; being at a great diſtance, methought, he called ſo loud; it came, as I thought ſince, to have ſtirred me up to prayer, and to watchfulneſs: it came to acquaint me, that a cloud and a ſtorm was coming down upon me; but I underſtood it not.

94. Alſo, as I remember, that time that it called to me ſo loud was the laſt time that it ſounded in mine ears; but methinks I hear ſtill with what a loud voice theſe words, 'Simon, 'Simon,' ſounded in mine ears. I thought verily, as I have told you, that ſomebody had called after me, that was half a mile behind me: and although that was not my name, yet it made me ſuddenly look behind me, believing that he that called ſo loud meant me.

95. But ſo fooliſh was I, and ignorant, that I knew not the reaſon of this ſound, which, as I did both ſee and feel ſoon after, was ſent from heaven as an alarm, to awaken me to provide for what was coming; only I ſhould muſe and wonder in my mind, to think what ſhould be the reaſon that this ſcripture, and that at this rate, ſo often and ſo loud, ſhould ſtill be ſound-

ing and rattling in mine ears; but, as I ſaid before, I ſoon after perceived the end of God therein.

96. For about the ſpace of a month after, a very great ſtorm came down upon me, which handled me twenty times worſe than all I had met with before: it came ſtealing upon me, now by one piece, then by another: firſt, all my comfort was taken from me: then darkneſs ſeized upon me: after which whole floods of blaſphemies, both againſt God, Chriſt, and the ſcriptures, were poured upon my ſpirit, to my great confuſion and aſtoniſhment. Theſe blaſphemous thoughts were ſuch as ſtirred up queſtions in me, againſt the very being of God, and of his only beloved Son; as, Whether there were in truth a God or Chriſt? and whether the holy ſcriptures were not rather a fable and cunning ſtory, than the holy and pure word of God?

97. The tempter would alſo much aſſault me with this: "How can you tell but that the Turks had as good ſcriptures to prove their Mahoment the Saviour, as we have to prove our Jeſus? And could I think that ſo many thouſands, in ſo many countries and kingdoms, ſhould be without the knowledge of the right way to heaven, if there were indeed a heaven; and that we only, who live in a corner of the earth, ſhould alone be bleſſed therewith? Every one doth think his own religion righteſt, both Jews, and Moors, and Pagans! and how if all our faith, and Chriſt, and Scriptures ſhould be but a think too?

98. Sometimes I have endeavoured to argue againſt theſe ſuggeſtions, and to ſet ſome of the

ſentence of bleſſed Paul againſt them; but, alas! I quickly felt, when I thus did, ſuch arguings as theſe would return again upon me: "Though we made ſo great a matter of Paul, and of his words; yet how could I tell, but that in very deed, he being a ſubtile and cunning man, might give himſelf up to deceive with ſtrong deluſions, and alſo take the pains and travel to undo and deſtroy his fellows?"

99. Theſe ſuggeſtions, and many other, which at this time I may not, nor dare not utter, neither by word or pen, did make ſuch a ſeizure upon my ſpirit, and did ſo overweigh my heart, both with their number, continuance, and fiery force, that I felt as if there were nothing elſe but theſe from morning to night within me, and as though indeed there could be room for nothing elſe; and alſo concluded, that God had, in very wrath to my ſoul, given me up to them, to be carried away with them, as with a mighty whirlwind.

100. Only by the diſtaſte that they gave unto my ſpirit, "I felt there was ſomething in me that refuſed to embrace them." But this conſideration I then only had, when God gave me leave to ſwallow my ſpittle; otherwiſe the noiſe, and ſtrength, and force of theſe temptations, would drown and overflow, and, as it were, bury all ſuch thoughts, and the remembrance of any ſuch thing. While I was in this temptation, I ſhould often find my mind ſuddenly put upon it, to curſe and ſwear, or to ſpeak ſome grievous thing againſt God, or Chriſt his Son, and of the ſcriptures.

101. Now I thought, ſurely I am poſſeſſed of the devil: at other times again I thought I

ſhould be bereft of my wits; for inſtead of lauding and magifying God the Lord with others, if I have but heard him ſpoken of, preſently ſome moſt horrible blaſphemous thought or other would bolt out of my heart againſt him: ſo that whether I did think that God was, or again did think there was no ſuch thing, no love, nor peace, nor gracious diſpoſition, could I feel within me.

102. Theſe things did ſink me into very deep deſpair; for I concluded that ſuch things could not poſſibly be found amongſt them that loved God. I often, when theſe temptations had been with force upon me, did compare myſelf to the caſe of ſuch a child, whom ſome gypſy hath by force took up in her arms, and is carrying from friend and country: kick ſometimes I did, and alſo ſhriek and cry: but yet I was bound in the wings of the temptation, and the wind would carry me away. I thought alſo of Saul, and of the evil ſpirit that did poſſeſs him, and did greatly fear that my condition was the ſame with that of his. 1 *Sam.* xvi. 15.

103. In thoſe days, when I have heard others talk of what was the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, then would the tempter ſo provoke me to deſire to ſin that ſin, that I was as if I would not, muſt not, neither ſhould be quiet until I had committed it. Now no ſin would ſerve but that: if it were to be committed by ſpeaking of ſuch a word, then I have been ready to clap my hands under my chin, to hold my mouth from opening; and to that end alſo I have had thoughts at other times, to leap with my head downward, into ſome muck-hole or other, to keep my mouth from ſpeaking.

104. Now again I beheld the condition of the dog and toad, and counted the eſtate of every thing that God had made, far better than this dreadful ſtate of mine, and ſuch as my companions was: yea gladly would I have been in the condition of a dog, or horſe; for I knew they had no ſouls to periſh under the everlaſting weight of hell, or ſin, as mine was like to do. Nay, and thought I ſaw this, felt this, and was broken to pieces with it; yet that which added to my ſorrow was, that I could not find, that with all my ſoul I did deſire deliverance. That ſcripture did alſo tear and rend my ſoul in the midſt of theſe diſtractions: 'The wicked are 'like the troubled ſea, which cannot reſt; 'whoſe waters caſt up mire and dirt. There 'is no peace to the wicked, ſaith my God.' *Iſa.* lvii. 20, 21.

105. And now my heart was, at times, exceeding hard; if I would have given a thouſand pounds for a tear, I could not ſhed one: no, nor ſometimes ſcarce deſire to ſhed one. I was much dejected to think that this would be my lot. I ſaw ſome could mourn and lament their ſin; and others, again, could rejoice, and bleſs God for Chriſt: and others again could quietly talk of, and with gladneſs remember the word of God: while I only was in the ſtorm or tempeſt. This much ſunk me; I thought my condition was alone; I ſhould therefore much bewail my hard hap, but get out of, or get rid of theſe things, I could not.

106. While this temptation laſted, which was about a year, I could attend upon none of the ordinances of God, but with ſore and great affliction. Yea, then was I moſt diſ-

treſſed with blaſphemies: and deſpair would hold me a captive there: if I have been reading, then ſometimes I had ſudden thoughts to queſtion all I read; ſometimes, again, my mind would be ſtrangely ſnatched away, and poſſeſſed with other things, that I have neither known nor regarded, nor remembered ſo much as the ſentence that but now I have read.

107. In prayer alſo I have been greatly troubled at this time. Sometimes I have thought I have felt him behind me, pull my clothes: he would be alſo continually at me in time of prayer, to have done, break off; make haſte, you have prayed enough, and ſtay no longer: ſtill drawing my mind away. Sometimes alſo he would caſt in ſuch wicked thoughts as theſe: That I muſt pray to him, or for him: I have thought ſometimes of that, 'Fall down,' or 'if thou wilt fall down, and worſhip me,' *Matth.* iv. 9.

108. Alſo, when becauſe I have had wandering thoughts in the time of this duty, I have laboured to compoſe my mind, and fix it upon God; then with great force hath the tempter laboured to diſtract me, and confound me, and to turn away my mind, by preſenting to my heart and fancy, the form of a buſh, a bull, a beſom, or the like, as if I ſhould pray to theſe: to theſe he would alſo, at ſome times eſpecially, ſo hold my mind, that I was as if I could think of nothing elſe, or pray to nothing elſe, but to theſe, or ſuch as they.

109. Yet at times I ſhould have ſome ſtrong and heart-affecting apprehenſions of God, and the reality of the truth of his goſpel: but, oh how would my heart, at ſuch times, put forth

itſelf with inexpreſſible groanings! My whole ſoul was then in every word; I ſhould cry with pangs after God, that he would be merciful unto me. But then I ſhould be daunted again with ſuch conceits as theſe: I ſhould think that God did mock at theſe my prayers, ſaying, and that in the audience of the holy angels, "This poor ſimple wretch doth hanker after me, as if I had nothing to do with my mercy but to beſtow it on ſuch as he.—Alas, poor ſoul! how art thou deceived! It is not for ſuch as thee to have favour with the Higheſt."

110. Then hath the tempter come upon me alſo with ſuch diſcouragements as theſe: 'You are very hot for mercy, but I will cool you; this frame ſhall not laſt always: many have been as hot as you for a while, but I have quenched their zeal." And with this, ſuch and ſuch, who were fallen off, would be ſet before mine eyes. Then I ſhould be afraid that I ſhould do ſo too; but, thought I, I am glad this comes into my mind: well, I will watch, and take what care I can. "Tho' you do," ſays Satan, "I ſhall be too hard for you; I will cool you inſenſibly, by degrees, by little and little." "What care I," ſaith he, "though I be ſeven years in chilling your heart, if I can do it at laſt? Continual rocking will lull a crying child aſleep: I will ply it cloſe, but I will have my end accompliſhed. Though you be burning hot at preſent, yet I can pull you from this fire, I ſhall have you cold before it be long."

111. Theſe things brought me into great ſtraits: for as I at preſent could not find myſelf

fit for preſent death, ſo I thought to live long would make me yet more unfit; for time would make me forget all, and wear even the remembrance of the evil of ſin, the worth of heaven, and the need I had of the blood of Chriſt to waſh me both out of mind and thought. But I thank Chriſt Jeſus, theſe things did not at preſent make me ſlack my crying, but rather did put me upon it, 'like her who met with 'the adulterer,' *Deut.* xxii. 26. in which days that was a good word to me, after I had ſuffered theſe things a-while: 'I am perſuaded, 'that neither height, nor depth, nor life, &c. 'ſhall ſeparate us from the love of God, which 'is in Chriſt Jeſus,' *Rom.* vii. 38. And now I hoped long life ſhould not deſtroy me, nor make me miſs of heaven.

112. Yet I had ſome ſupports in this temptation, though they were then all queſtioned by me: that in *Jer.* iii. at the firſt, was ſomething to me; and ſo was the conſideration of verſe 4. of that chapter; that though we have ſpoken and done as evil things as we could, yet we ſhall cry unto God, 'My Father, thou art 'the guide of my youth;' and ſhall return unto him.

113. I had alſo once a ſweet glance from that in 2 *Cor.* v. 21. 'For he hath made him to be 'ſin for us, who knew no ſin; that we might 'be made the righteouſneſs of God in him.' I remembr that one day, as I was ſitting in a neighbour's houſe, and there very ſad at the conſideration of my many bleſphemies, and as I was ſaying in my mind, "What ground have I to think that I, who have been ſo vile and abominable, ſhould ever inherit eternal

life?" that word came ſuddenly upon me, 'What ſhall we ſay to theſe things: If God be 'for us, who can be againſt us?' *Rom.* viii. 31. That alſo was an help unto me, 'Becauſe I 'live, ye ſhall live alſo,' *John* xiv. 19. But theſe words were but hints, touches, and ſhort viſits, tho' very ſweet when preſent; only they laſted not, but, like to Peter's ſheet, 'of a 'ſudden were caught up from me, to heaven 'again,' *Acts* x. 19.

114. But afterwards the Lord did more fully and graciouſly diſcover himſelf unto me, and indeed did quite, not only deliver me from the guilt that, by theſe things was laid upon my conſcience, but alſo from the very filth thereof; for the temptation was removed, and I was put into my right mind again, as other Chriſtians were.

115. I remember one day, as I was travelling into the country, and muſing on the wickedneſs and blaſphemy of my heart, and conſidering the enmity that was in me to God, that ſcripture came into my mind, 'He hath 'made peace by the blood of his croſs,' *Col.* i. 20. By which I was made to ſee, both again and again that day, that God and my ſoul were friends by this blood: yea, I ſaw that the juſtice of God and my ſinful ſoul could embrace and kiſs each other through this blood. This was a good day to me. I hope I ſhall never forget it.

116. At another time, as I was ſet by the fire in my houſe, and muſing on my wretchedneſs, the Lord made that alſo a precious word unto me: 'Foraſmuch then as the children are

'partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself 'likewise took part of the same; that through 'death he might destroy him that had the 'power of death, that is, the devil; and de-'liver those, who, through fear of death, were 'all their life subject to bondage,' *Heb.* ii. 14, 15. I thought that the glory of these words was then so weighty on me, that I was both once and twice ready to swoon as I sat; yet not with grief and trouble, but with solid joy and peace.

117. At this time also I sat under the ministry of holy Mr. Gifford, whose doctrine, by God's grace, was much for my stability. This man made it much his business to deliver the people of God from all those false and unsound tests, that by nature we are prone to. He would bid us take special heed, that we took not up any truth upon trust; as from this, or that, or any other man or men; but cry mightily to God, that he would convince us of the reality thereof, and set us down therein by his own spirit in the holy word: for, said he, if you do otherwise, when temptations come, if strongly, you not having received them with evidence from heaven, will find you want that help and strength, now to resist, that once you thought you had.

118. This was as seasonable to my soul, as the former and latter rain in their season: for I had found, and that by sad experience, the truth of these his words; for I had felt, no man can say, especially when tempted by the devil, that Jesus Christ is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Wherefore I found my soul, thro' grace, very apt to drink in this doctrine, and to incline to pray to God, that in nothing that pertained to God's glory, and my own eternal happiness,

he would ſuffer me to be without the confirmation thereof from heaven: for now I ſaw clearly, there was an exceeding difference betwixt the notion of the fleſh and blood, and the revelation of God in heaven; alſo a great difference betwixt that faith that is feigned, and according to man's wiſdom, and that which comes by a man's being born thereto of God, *Matth.* xvi. 15. 1 *John* v. 1.

119. But, oh! now, how was my ſoul led from truth to truth, to God! even from the birth and cradle of the Son of God, to his acceſſion, and ſecond coming from heaven to judge the world?

120. Truly, I then found, upon this account, the great God was very good unto me; for, to my remembrance, there was not any thing that I then cried unto God to make known, and reveal unto me, but he was pleaſed to do it for me; I mean, not one part of the goſpel of the Lord Jeſus, but I was orderly led into it. Methought I ſaw, with great evidence, from the four Evangeliſts, the wonderful works of God, in giving Jeſus Chriſt to ſave us, from his conception and birth, even to his ſecond coming to judgment: methought I was as if I had ſeen him born, as if I had ſeen him grow up, as if I had ſeen him walk through this world, from the cradle to the croſs; to which alſo, when he came, I ſaw how gently he gave himſelf to be hanged, and nailed on it, for my ſins and wicked doing. Alſo as I was muſing on this his progreſs, that dropped on my ſpirit, He was ordained for the ſlaughter, 1 *Pet.* i. 19, 20.

121. When I have conſidered alſo the truth of his reſurrection, and have remembered that

word, 'Touch me not, Mary,' &c. I have ſeen, as if he had leaped out of the grave's mouth, for joy that he was riſen again, and had got the conqueſt over our dreadful foes, *John* xx. 17. I have alſo, in the ſpirit, ſeen him a man on the right hand of God the Father for me; and have ſeen the manner of his coming from heaven, to judge the world with glory, and have been confirmed in theſe things by theſe ſcriptures following, *Acts* i. 9, 10. and vii. 56. and x. 42. *Heb.* vii. 24. and viii. 3, 8. *Rev.* i. 18. 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 17, 18.

122. Once I was troubled to know, whether the Lord Jeſus was man as well as God, and God as well as man; and truly, in thoſe days, let men ſay what they would, unleſs I had it with evidence from heaven, all was nothing to me, I counted myſelf not ſet down in any truth of God. Well, I was much troubled about this point, and could not tell how to be reſolved. At laſt that in *Rev.* v. came into my mind: 'And I beheld, and lo, in the midſt 'of the throne, and of the four beaſts, and in 'the midſt of the elders, ſtood a Lamb.' In the midſt of the throne, thought I, there is the godhead; in the midſt of the elders, there is his manhood. But, oh! methought this did gliſter! it was a goodly touch, and gave me ſweet ſatisfaction. That other ſcripture alſo did help me much in this: 'To us a child 'is born, to us a ſon is given, and the govern-'ment ſhall be upon his ſhoulder: and his 'name ſhall be called Wonderful, Counſellor, 'The mighty God, The everlaſting Father, 'The Prince of Peace.' *Iſa.* ix. 6.

123. Alſo, beſides theſe teachings of God, in his word, the Lord made uſe of two things

to confirm me in this truth: the one was the errors of the Quakers; and the other was the guilt of sin; for as the Quakers did oppose the truth, so God did the more confirm me in it, by leading me into the scripture that did wonderfully maintain it.

124. The errors that this people then maintained, were, 1. That the holy scriptures were not the word of God. 2. That every man in the world had the spirit of Christ, grace, faith, &c. 3. That Christ Jesus as crucified, and dying sixteen hundred years ago, did not satisfy divine justice for the sins of the people. 4. That Christ's flesh and blood was within the saints. 5. That the bodies of the good and bad that are buried in the church-yard, shall not rise again. 6. That the resurrection is past with good men already. 7. That the man Jesus, that was crucified between two thieves on Mount Calvary, in the land of Canaan, by Jerusalem, was not ascended above the starry heavens. That he should not, even the same Jesus that died by the hand of the Jews, come again at the last day, and, as man, judge all nations, &c.

125. Many more vile and abominable things were in those days fomented by them, by which I was driven to a more narrow search of the scriptures, and was, through their light and testimony, not only enlightened, but greatly confirmed and comforted in the truth: and, as I said, the guilt of sin did help me much; for still as that would come upon me, the blood of Christ did take it off again, and again, and again; and that too sweetly according to the scripture. O friends! cry to God to re-

veal Jesus Christ unto you, there is none teacheth like him.

126. It would be too long here to stay to tell you in particular how God did set me down in all the things of Christ, and how he did, that he might do so, lead me into his words; yea, and also how he did open them unto me, and make them shine before me, and cause them to dwell with me, talk with me, and comfort me, over and over, both of his own being, and the being of his Son, and Spirit, and word, and gospel.

127. Only this, as I said before, I will say unto you again, that in general he was pleased to take this course with me first, to suffer me to be afflicted with temptations concerning them, and then reveal them to me: as sometimes I should lie under great guilt for sin, even crushed to the ground therewith; and then the Lord would shew me the death of Christ; yea, so sprinkle my conscience with his blood, that I should find, and that before I was aware, that in that conscience, where but just now did reign and rage the law, even there would rest and abide the peace and love of God, through Christ.

128. Now I had an evidence, as I ought, of my salvation from heaven, with many golden seals thereon, all hanging in my sight: now could I remember this manifestation, and the other discovery of grace, with comfort; and should often long and desire that the last day were come, that I might be for ever enflamed with the sight, and joy, and communion with him, whose head was crowned with thorns, whose face was spit on, and body broken, and soul made an offering for

my ſins: for whereas before I lay continually trembling at the mouth of hell, now methought I was got ſo far therefrom, that I could not, when I looked back, ſcarce diſcern it: and oh! thought I, that I were fourſcore years old now, that I might die quickly, that my ſoul might be gone to reſt.

129. But before I had got thus far out of theſe my temptations, I did greatly long to ſee ſome ancient godly man's experience, who had writ ſome hundreds of years before I was born; for, for thoſe who had writ in our days, I thought (but I deſire them now to pardon me) that they had writ only that which others felt; or elſe had, through the ſtrength of their wits and parts, ſtudied to anſwer ſuch objections as they perceived others were perplexed with, without going down themſelves into the deep. Well, after many ſuch longings in my mind, the God in whoſe hands are all our days and ways, did caſt into my hands, one day, a book of Martin Luther; it was his Comment on the Galatians; it alſo was ſo old, that it was ready to fall piece from piece if I did but turn it over. Now I was pleaſed much that ſuch an old book had fallen into my hands; the which, when I had but a little way peruſed, I found my condition in his experience ſo largely and profoundly handled, as if his book had been written out of my heart. This made me marvel, for thus, thought I, this man could not know any thing of the ſtate of Chriſtians now, but muſt needs write and ſpeak the experience of former days.

130. Beſides, he doth moſt gravely alſo, in that book, debate of the riſe of theſe tempta-

tions, namely, blaſphemy, deſperation, and the like; ſhewing that the law of Moſes, as well as the devil, death, and hell, hath a very great hand therein: the which at firſt was very ſtrange to me; but conſidering and watching, I found it ſo indeed. But of particulars here I intend nothing; only this methinks I muſt let fall before all men, I do prefer this book of Martin Luther upon the Galatians, (excepting the holy Bible) before all the books that ever I have ſeen, as moſt fit for a wounded conſcience.

131. And now I found, as I thought, that I loved Chriſt dearly: Oh! methought my ſoul cleaved unto him, my affections cleaved unto him: I felt love to him as hot as fire: and now, as Job ſaid, I thought I ſhould die in my neſt. But I did quickly find, that my great love was but little; and that I, who had, as I thought, ſuch burning love to Jeſus Chriſt, could let him go again for a very trifle: God can tell how to abaſe us, and can hide pride from man. Quickly after this my love was tried to purpoſe.

132. For after the Lord had, in this manner, thus graciouſly delivered me from this great and ſore temptation, and had ſet me down ſo ſweetly in the faith of his holy goſpel, and had given me ſuch ſtrong conſolation, and bleſſed evidence from heaven, touching my intereſt in his love through Chriſt; the tempter came upon me again, and that with a more grievous and dreadful temptation than before.

133. And that was, "To ſell and part with this moſt bleſſed Chriſt; to exchange him for the things of life, for any thing." The temptation lay upon me for the ſpace of a year, and

did follow me so continually, that I was not rid of it one day in a month; no, not sometimes one hour in many days together, unless when I was asleep.

134. And though in my judgment I was persuaded, that those who were once effectually in Christ, (as I hoped, through his grace, I had seen myself), could never lose him for ever: ('For the land shall not be sold for ever, for 'the land is mine,' said God, *Lev* xxv. 23.); yet it was a continual vexation to me to think that I should have so much as one such thought within me against Christ, a Jesus, that had done for me as he had done; and yet then I had almost none other but such blasphemous ones.

135. But it was neither my dislike of the thought, nor yet any desire and endeavour to resist it, that in the least did shake or abate the continuation, or force and strength thereof; for it did always, in almost whatever I thought, intermix itself therewith, in such sort, that I could neither eat my food, stoop for a pin, chop a stick, or cast mine eyes to look on this or that, but still the temptation would come, "Sell Christ for this, or sell Christ for that; sell him, sell him."

136. Sometimes it would run in my thoughts, not so little as a hundred times together, "Sell him, sell him, sell him:" Against which, I may say, for whole hours together, I have been forced to stand as continually leaning and forcing my spirit against it, lest haply, before I were aware some wicked thought might arise in my heart that might consent thereto; and sometimes the tempter would make me believe I

had conſented to it; but then I ſhould be as tortured upon a rack for a whole day together.

137. This temptation did put me to ſuch ſcars, leſt I ſhould at ſometimes, I ſay, conſent thereto, and be overcome therewith, that by the very force of my mind, in labouring to gainſay and reſiſt this wickedneſs, my very body would be put into action or motion, by way of puſhing or thruſting with my hands or elbows; ſtill anſwering as faſt as the deſtroyer ſaid, Sell him."—"I will not, I will not, I will not; no, not for thouſands, thouſands, thouſands of worlds." Thus reckoning, leſt I ſhould in the midſt of theſe aſſaults, ſet too low a value of him, even until I ſcarce well knew where I was, or how to be compoſed again.

138. At theſe ſeaſons he would not let me eat my food as quiet; but forſooth, when I was ſet at the table at any meat, I muſt go hence to pray; I muſt leave my food now, and juſt now; ſo counterfeit holy alſo would this devil be when I was thus tempted, I ſhould ſay in myſelf, "Now I am at my meat, let me make an end." "No," ſaid he, "you muſt do it now, or you will diſpleaſe God, and deſpiſe Chriſt." Wherefore I was muſt afflicted with theſe things; and becauſe of the ſinfulneſs of my nature, (imagining that theſe things were impulſes from God), I ſhould deny to do it, as if I denied God; and then ſhould I be as guilty, becauſe I did not obey a temptation of the devil, as if I had broken the law of God indeed.

139. But, to be brief, one morning as I did lie in my bed, I was, as at other times, moſt fiercely aſſaulted with this temptation, "to ſell and part with Chriſt," the wicked ſuggeſtion

ſtill running in my mind, "Sell him, ſell him, ſell him, ſell him, ſell him," as faſt as a man could ſpeak; againſt which alſo, in my mind, as at other times, I anſwered, "No, no; not for thouſands, thouſands, thouſands," at leaſt twenty times together. But at laſt, after much ſtriving, even until I was almoſt out of breath, I felt this thought paſs through my heart, "Let him go, if he will;" and I thought alſo, that I felt my heart freely conſent thereunto. Oh, the diligence of Satan! Oh, the deſperateneſs of man's heart!

140. Now was the battle won, and down fell I, as a bird that is ſhot from the top of a tree, into great guilt and fearful deſpair. Thus getting out of my bed, I went moping into the field; but God knows, with as heavy an heart as mortal man, I think, could bear; where, for the ſpace of two hours, I was like a man bereft of life, and as now, paſt all recovery, and bound over to eternal punithment.

141. And withal, that ſcripture did ſeize upon my ſoul. 'O profane perſon, as Eſau, 'who for one morſel of meat ſold his birth-'right: for ye know, how that afterwards, 'when he would have inherited the bleſſing, 'he was rejected; for he found no place of 'repentance, though he ſought it carefully with 'tears,' *Heb.* xii. 16, 17.

142. Now was I as one bound; I felt myſelf ſhut up into the judgment to come; nothing now for two years together would abide with me, but damnation, and an expectation of damnation: I ſay, nothing now would abide with me but this, ſave ſome few moments for relief, as in the ſequel you will ſee.

143. Theſe words were to my ſoul like fetters of braſs to my legs, in the continual ſound of which I went for ſeveral months together. But about ten or eleven o'clock on that day, as I was walking under an hedge (full of ſorrow and guilt, God knows) and bemoaning myſelf from this hard hap, that ſuch a thought ſhould ariſe within me, ſuddenly this ſentence ruſhed in upon me, 'The blood of Chriſt remits all guilt.' At this I made a ſtand in my ſpirit; with that this word took hold upon me, 'The 'blood of Jeſus Chriſt his own Son cleanſeth 'us from all ſin,' 1 *John* i. 7.

144. Now I began to conceive peace in my ſoul; and methought I ſaw as if the tempter did leer and ſteal away from me, as being aſhamed of what he had done. At the ſame time alſo I had my ſin and the blood of Chriſt thus repreſented to me, that my ſin, when compared to the blood of Chriſt, was no more to it than this little clod or ſtone before me is to this vaſt and wide field that here I ſee. This gave me good encouragement for the ſpace of two or three hours; in which time alſo methought I ſaw by faith the Son of God, as ſuffering for my ſins. But becauſe it tarried not, I therefore ſunk in my ſpirit, under exceeding guilt again.

145. But chiefly by the afore-mentioned ſcripture concerning Eſau's ſelling of his birthright: for that ſcripture would lie all day long in my mind, and hold me down, ſo that I could by no means lift up myſelf; for when I would ſtrive to turn to this ſcripture, or that, for relief, ſtill that ſentence would be ſounding in me, 'For ye know how that afterwards, when he 'would have inherited the bleſſing, he found 'no place of repentance, though he ſought it 'carefully with tears.'

146. Sometimes, indeed, I ſhould have a touch from that in *Luke* xxii. 31. 'I have 'prayed for thee that thy faith fail not;' but it would not abide upon me; neither could I indeed, when I conſidered my ſtate, find ground to conceive in the leaſt that there ſhould be the root of that grace in me, having ſinned as I had done. Now was I tore and rent in an heavy caſe for many days together.

147. Then began I with ſad and careful heart, to conſider of the nature and largeneſs of my ſin, and to ſearch into the word of God, if I could in any place eſpy a word of promiſe, or any encouraging ſentence by which I might take relief. Wherefore I began to conſider that of *Mark* iii. 'All manner of ſins and blaſphe-'mies ſhall be forgiven unto the ſons of men, 'wherewith ſoever they ſhall blaſpheme.' Which place, methought, at a bluſh, did contain a large and glorious promiſe for the pardon of high offences. But conſidering the place more fully, I thought it was rather to be underſtood, as relating more chiefly to thoſe who had, while in a natural eſtate, committed ſuch things as there are mentioned; but not to me, who had not only received light and mercy, but that had both after, and alſo contrary to that, ſo ſlighted Chriſt as I have done.

148. I feared therefore that this wicked ſin of mine might be that ſin unpardonable, of which he there thus ſpeaketh, 'But he that 'ſhall blaſpheme againſt the Holy Ghoſt, hath 'never forgiveneſs, but is in danger of eternal 'damnation,' *Mark* iii. And I did the rather give credit to this, becauſe of that ſentence in the Hebrews, 'For you know how that after-'wards, when he would have inherited the

'bleſſing, he was rejected; for he found no 'place of repentance, though he ſought it 'carefully with tears." And this ſtuck always with me.

149. And now was I both a burden and terror to myſelf; nor did I ever ſo know, as now, what it was to be weary of my life, and yet afraid to die. Oh, how gladly now would I have been any body but myſelf! any thing but a man! and in any condition but my own! for there was nothing did paſs more frequently over my mind, that that it was impoſſible for me to be forgiven my tranſgreſſion, and to be ſaved from wrath to come.

150. And now began I to labour to call again time that was paſt; wiſhing a thouſand times twice told, that the day was yet to come, when I ſhould be tempted to ſuch a ſin! concluding with great indignation both againſt my heart, and all aſſaults, how I would rather have been torn in pieces, than found a conſenter thereto. But, alas! theſe thoughts and wiſhings, and reſolvings, were now too late to help me: This thought had paſſed my heart, God hath let me go, and I am fallen. 'Oh! 'thought I, that it was with me as in months 'paſt; as in the days when God preſerved me.' *Job* xxix. 2.

151. Then again, being loth and unwilling to periſh, I began to compare my ſin with others, to ſee if I could find that any of thoſe that were ſaved had done as I had done. So I conſidered David's adultery and murder, and found them moſt heinous crimes; and thoſe too committed after light and grace received. But yet, by conſidering, that his tranſgreſſions were only ſuch as were againſt the

law of Moſes, from which the Lord Chriſt could, with the conſent of his word, deliver him: but mine was againſt the goſpel; yea, againſt the Mediator thereof, I had ſold my Saviour.

152. Now again ſhould I be as if racked upon the wheel, when I conſidered, that beſides the guilt that poſſeſſed me, I ſhould be ſo void of grace, ſo bewitched. What, thought I, muſt it be no ſin but this? "Muſt it needs be the great tranſgreſſion?" *Pſalm* xix. 13. "Muſt that wicked one touch my ſoul," 1 *John* v. 18. Oh, what ſting did I find in all theſe ſentences!

153. What, thought I, is there but one ſin that is unpardonable; but one ſin that layeth the ſoul without the reach of God's mercy; and muſt I be guilty of that? Muſt it needs be that? Is there but one ſin among ſo many millions of ſins, for which there is no forgiveneſs; and muſt I commit this? Oh, unhappy ſin! Oh, unhappy man! Theſe things would ſo break and confound my ſpirit, that I could not tell what to do. I thought, at times, they would have broke my wits; and ſtill to aggravate my miſery, that would run in my mind, 'You know how that afterwards, when he 'would have inherited the bleſſing, he was 'rejected.' Oh! none knows the terrors of thoſe days but myſelf.

154. After this I began to conſider of Peter's ſin, which he committed in his denying his Maſter: and indeed this came nigheſt to mine, of any that I could find; for he had denied his Saviour, as I after light and mercy received; yea, and that too, after warning given him. I alſo conſidered, that he did it once and twice;

and that after time to consider betwixt. But though I put all these circumstances together, that, if possible, I might find help; yet I considered again, that his was but a denial of his Master, but mine was a selling of my Saviour. Wherefore I thought with myself, that I came nearer to Judas than either to David or Peter.

155. Here again my torment would flame out and afflict me: yea, it would grind me, as it were to powder, to consider the preservation of God towards others, while I fell into the snare: for in my thus considering of other mens sins, and comparing of them with my own, I could evidently see God preserved them, notwithstanding their wickedness, and would not let them, as he had let me, become a son of perdition.

156. But oh, how did my soul at this time prize the preservation that God had set about his people! Ah, how safely did I see them walk, whom God had hedged in! They were within his care, protection, and special providence; though they were full as bad as I, by nature, yet, because he loved them he would not suffer them to fall without the range of mercy. But as for me, I was gone, I had done it; he would not preserve me, nor keep me, but suffered me, because I was a reprobate, to fall as I had done. Now did those blessed places that speak of God's keeping his people, shine like the sun before me, though not to comfort me, yet to shew me the blessed state and heritage of those whom the Lord had blessed.

157. Now I saw, that as God had his hand in all providences and dispensations that overtook his elect, so he had his hand in all the temptations that they had to sin against them; not to animate them to wickedness, but to

chuſe their temptations and troubles for them; and alſo to leave them, for a time, to ſuch things only that might not deſtroy, but humble them; as might not put them beyond, but lay them in the way of renewing his mercy. But oh, what love, what care, what kindneſs and mercy did I now ſee, mixing itſelf with the moſt ſevere and dreadful of all God's ways to his people! He would let David, Hezekiah, Solomon, Peter, and others, fall; but he would not let them fall into ſin unpardonable, nor into hell for ſin. Oh! thought I, theſe be the men that God hath loved; theſe be the men that God, though he chaſtiſeth them, keeps them in ſafety by him; and them whom he makes to abide under the ſhadow of the Almighty. But all theſe thoughts added ſorrow, grief, and horror to me, as whatever I now thought on, it was killing to me. If I thought how God kept his own, that was killing to me; if I thought how I was fallen myſelf, that was killing to me. As all things wrought together for the beſt, and to do good to them that were the called, according to his purpoſe; ſo I thought that all things wrought for damage, and for my eternal overthrow.

158. Then again I began to compare my ſin with the ſin of Judas, that, if poſſible, I might find if mine differed from that which in truth, is unpardonable: And oh, thought I, if it ſhould differ from it, tho' but the breadth of an hair, what an happy condition is my ſoul in; and by conſidering, I found, that Judas did this intentionally, but mine was againſt my prayer and ſtrivings. Beſides, his was committed with much deliberation, but mine in a fearful hurry, on a ſudden. All this while I was toſſed to and fro like the the locuſt, & driven

from trouble to ſorrow; hearing always the ſound of Eſau's fall in mine ears, and of the dreadful conſequences thereof.

159. Yet this conſideration about Judas's ſin was, for a while, ſome little relief to me; for I ſaw I had not, as to the circumſtances, tranſgreſſed ſo fully as he. But this was quickly gone again: for I thought with myſelf, there might be more ways than one to commit this unpardonable ſin; alſo I thought that there might be degrees of that as well as of other tranſgreſſions; wherefore, for ought I yet could perceive, this iniquity of mine might be ſuch as might never be paſſed by.

160. I was often now aſhamed, that I ſhould be like ſuch an ugly man as Judas. I thought alſo how loathſome I ſhould be unto all the ſaints in the day of judgment: inſomuch that now I could ſcarce ſee a good man that I believed had a good conſcience, but I ſhould feel my heart tremble at him, while I was in his preſence. Oh! now I ſaw a glory in walking with God, and what a mercy it was to have a good conſcience before hime.

161. I was much about this time tempted to content myſelf, by receiving ſome falſe opinion; as, that there ſhould be no ſuch thing as a day of judgment, that we ſhould not ariſe again, and that ſin was no ſuch grievous thing; the tempter ſuggeſted thus: "For if theſe things ſhould indeed be true, yet to believe otherwiſe, would yield you eaſe for the preſent. If you muſt periſh, never torment yourſelf ſo much beforehand; drive the thoughts of damning out of your mind, by poſſeſſing your mind with ſome ſuch concluſions that Atheiſts and Ranters uſe to help themſelves withal."

162. But oh! when ſuch thoughts have led thro' my heart, how, as it were, within a ſtep, hath death and judgment been in my view! Methought the judge ſtood at the door; I was as if it was come already; ſo that ſuch things could have no entertainment. But methinks I ſee by this, that Satan will uſe any means to keep the ſoul from Chriſt: he loveth not an awakened frame of ſpirit; ſecurity, blindneſs, darkneſs, and error, is the very kingdom and habitation of the wicked one.

163. I found it a hard work now to pray to God, becauſe deſpair was ſwallowing me up; I thought I was as with a tempeſt driven away from God; for always when I cried to God for mercy, this would come in, "'Tis too late; I am loſt; God hath let me fall, not to my correction, but my condemnation: my ſin is unpardonable; and I know, concerning Eſau, how that after he had ſold his birth-right, he would have inherited the bleſſing, but was rejected." About this time I did light on that dreadful ſtory of that miſerable mortal Francis Spira; a book that was to my troubled ſpirit as ſalt when rubbed into a freſh wound: every ſentence in that book, every groan of that man, with all the reſt of his actions in his dolours, as his tears, his prayers, his gnaſhing of teeth, his wringing of hands, his twiſting and languiſhing, and pining away under that mighty hand of God that was upon him, was as knives and daggers in my ſoul; eſpecially that ſentence of his was frightful to me, "Man knows the beginning of ſin, but who bounds the iſſues thereof?" Then would the former ſentence, as the concluſion of all, fall like an hot thunderbolt again upon my conſcience: 'For you

'know that afterwards, when he would have 'inherited the bleſſing, he was rejected; for 'he found no place of repentance, though he 'ſought it carefully with tears.'

164. Then ſhould I be ſtruck into a very great trembling, inſomuch that at ſometimes I could for days together, feel my very body, as well as my mind to ſhake and totter under the ſenſe of this dreadful judgment of God, that ſhould fall on thoſe that have ſinned that moſt fearful and unpardonable ſin. I felt alſo ſuch a clogging and heat at my ſtomach, by reaſon of this my terror, that I was, eſpecially at ſome times, as if my breaſt-bone would ſplit aſunder. Then I thought concerning that of Judas, who, by his 'falling head long, burſt aſunder, and all his bowels guſhed out,' *Acts.* i.

165. I feared alſo, that this was the mark that God did ſet on Cain, even continual fear and trembling, under the heavy load of guilt, that he had charged on him for the blood of his brother Abel. Thus did I wind, and twine, and ſhrink, under the burden that was upon me; which burden alſo did alſo ſo oppreſs me, that I could neither ſtand, nor go, nor lie, either at reſt or quiet.

166. Yet that ſaying would ſometimes come to my mind, 'He hath received gifts for the rebellious,' *Pſalm* lxviii. 18. The rebellious, thought I; why, ſurely, they are ſuch as once were under ſubjection to their prince, even thoſe who, after they have ſworn ſubjection to his government, have taken up arms againſt him: And this, thought I, is my very condition: I once loved him, feared him, ſerved him; but now I am a rebel: I have ſold him: I have ſaid, "Let him go if he will;" but yet

he has gifts for rebels, and then why not for me?

167. This ſometimes I thought on, and ſhould labour to take hold thereof, that ſome, though ſmall, refreſhment might have been conceived by me. But in this alſo I miſſed of my deſire: I was driven with force beyond it: I was like a man going to execution, even by that place where he would fain creep in and hide himſelf but may not.

168. Again, after I had thus conſidered the ſins of the ſaints in particular, and found mine went beyond them, than I began to think with myſelf, Set the caſe I ſhould put all theirs together, and mine alone againſt them, might I not then find encouragement! For if mine, though bigger than any one, yet ſhould be but equall to all, then there is hope; for that blood that hath virtue enough in it to waſh away all theirs, hath virtue enough in it to waſh away mine, tho' this one be full as big, if not bigger than all theirs. Here again I ſhould conſider the ſin of David, of Solomon, of Manaſſeh, of Peter, and the reſt of the great offenders; and ſhould alſo labour what I might, with fairneſs, to aggravate and heighten their ſins by ſeveral circumſtances.

169. I ſhould think with myſelf that David ſhed blood to cover his adultery, and that by the ſword of the children of Ammon: a work that could not be done but by contrivance, which was a great aggravation to his ſin. But then this would turn upon me: Ah! but theſe were but ſins againſt the law, from which there was a Jeſus ſent to ſave them; but yours is a ſin againſt the Saviour, and who ſhall ſave you from that?

170. Then I thought on Solomon, and how

he ſinned in loving ſtrange women, in falling away to their idols, in building them temples, in doing this after light, in his old age, after great mercy received. But the ſame concluſion that cut me off in the former conſideration, cut me off as to this, namely, That all thoſe were but ſins againſt the law, for which God hath provided a remedy: "But I had ſold my Saviour," and there remained no more ſacrifice for ſin.

171. I would then add to theſe mens ſins, the ſins of Manaſſeh; how that he built altars for idols in the houſe of the Lord: he alſo obſerved times, uſed inchantments, had to do with wizards, was a wizard, had his familiar ſpirit, burned his children in the fire in ſacrifice to devils, and made the ſtreets of Jeruſalem run down with the blood of inocents. Theſe, thought I, are great ſins, ſins of a bloody colour; but yet it would turn again upon me: "They are none of them of the nature of yours: you have parted with Jeſus; you have ſold your Saviour."

172. This one conſideration would always kill my heart, "My ſin was point blank againſt my Saviour:" and that too at that height, that I had in my heart ſaid of him, "Let him go if he will." Oh! methought this ſin was bigger than the ſins of a country, of a kingdom, or of the whole world; no one pardonable, nor all of them together, was able to equal mine; mine outwent them every one.

173. Now I ſhould find my mind to flee from God, as from the face of a dreadful judge; yet this was my torment, I could not eſcape his hand: 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hand of the living God!' *Heb.* x. But bleſſed be his grace, that ſcripture, in theſe flying fits, would call as running after me, 'I

'have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy tranſ-
'greſſions; and as a cloud thy ſins: return unto
'me, for I have redeemed thee,' *Iſa.* xliv. 22. This, I ſay, would come in upon my mind, when I was fleeing from the face of God; for I did flee from his face, that is, my mind and ſpirit fled before him; by reaſon of his highneſs, I could not endure. Then would the text cry, 'Return unto me;' it would cry aloud, with a very great voice, 'Return unto me, for I have redeemed thee.' Indeed this would make me make a little ſtop, and as it were look over my ſhoulder behind me, to ſee if I could diſcern that the God of grace did follow me with pardon in his hand. But I could no ſooner do that, but all would be clouded and darkened again by that ſentence, 'For you know, how that afterwards, 'when he would have inherited the bleſſing, he 'found no place of repentance, tho' he ſought 'it carefully with tears.' Wherefore I could not refrain, but fled, though at ſome times it cried, 'Return, return,' as it did hollow after me. But I feared to cloſe in therewith, leſt it ſhould not come from God; for that other, as I ſaid, was ſtill ſounding in my conſcience, 'For 'you know, that afterwards when he would have 'inherited the bleſſing, he was rejected, &c.

174. Once, as I was walking to and fro in a good man's ſhop, bemoaning of myſelf in my ſad and doleful ſtate, afflicting myſelf with ſelf-abhorrence for this wicked and ungodly thought, lamenting alſo this hard hap of mine, for that I ſhould commit ſo great a ſin, greatly fearing I ſhould not be pardoned; praying alſo in my heart, that if this ſin of mine did differ from that againſt the Holy Ghoſt, the Lord would ſhew it me; and being now ready to ſink with

fear, ſuddenly there was, as if there had ruſhed in at the window, the noiſe of wind upon me, but very pleaſant, and as if I heard a voice ſpeaking, "Didſt thou ever refuſe to be juſtified by the blood of Chriſt?" And withal my whole life of profeſſion paſt, was in a moment opened to me; wherein I was made to ſee, that deſignedly I had not; ſo my heart anſwered groaningly, "No." Then fell, with power, that word of God upon me, "See that ye re-'fuſe not him that ſpeaketh,' *Heb.* xii. 25. This made a ſtrange ſeizure upon my ſpirit: it brought light with it, and commanded a ſilence in my heart of all thoſe tumultuous thoughts that before did uſe, like maſterleſs hell-hounds, to roar and bellow, and make an hideous noiſe within me. It ſhewed me, alſo, that Jeſus Chriſt had yet a word of grace and mercy for me; that he had not, as I had feared, quite forſaken and caſt off my ſoul: yea, this was a kind of check for my proneneſs to deſperation; a kind of threatening of me, if I did not, notwithſtanding my ſins and the heinouſneſs of them, venture my ſalvation upon the Son of God. But as to my determining about this ſtrange diſpenſation, what it was, I know not; or from whence it came I know not: I have not yet, in twenty years time, been able to make a judgment of it: "I thought then what here I ſhould be loath to ſpeak." But verily that ſudden ruſhing wind was, as if an angel had come upon me; but both it and the ſalvation I will leave until the day of judgment: only this I ſay, it commanded a great calm in my ſoul; it perſuaded me there might be hope; it ſhewed me, as I thought, what the ſin unpardonable was, and that my ſoul had yet the

bleſſed privilege to flee to Jeſus Chriſt for mercy. But I ſay, concerning this diſpenſation, I know not yet what to ſay unto it; which was alſo, in truth, the cauſe that at firſt I did not ſpeak of it in the book: I do now alſo leave it to be thought on by men of ſound judgment. I lay not the ſtreſs of my ſalvation thereupon, but upon the Lord Jeſus, in the promiſe; yet ſeeing I am here unfolding of my ſecret things, I thought it might not be altogether inexpedient to let this alſo ſhew itſelf; though I cannot now relate the matter as there I did experience it. This laſted in the favour of it for about three or four days: and then I began to miſtruſt, and to deſpair again.

175. Wherefore ſtill my life hung in doubt before me, not knowing which way I ſhould go; only this I found my ſoul deſire, even to caſt itſelf at the foot of grace, by prayer and ſupplication. But oh, it was hard for me now, to have the face to pray to this Chriſt for mercy, againſt whom I had thus vilely ſinned: and indeed I had found it as difficult to come to God by prayer, after backſliding from him, as to do any other thing. Oh, the ſhame that did now attend me! eſpecially when I thought I am now a going to pray to him for mercy, that I had ſo lightly eſteemed but a while before! I was aſhamed, yea even confounded, becauſe this villainy had been committed by me. But I ſaw that there was but one way with me; I muſt go to him, and humble myſelf unto him, and beg that he, of his wonderful mercy, ſhould ſhew pity to me, and have mercy upon my wretched ſinful ſoul.

176. Which when the tempter perceived, he

ſtrongly ſuggeſted to me, "That I ought not to pray to God; for prayer was not for any in my caſe, neither could it do me good, becauſe I had rejected the Mediator, by whom all prayers come with acceptance to God the Father, and without whom no prayer could come into his preſence: wherefore now to pray is but to add ſin to ſin; yea, now to pray, ſeeing God has caſt you off, is the next way to anger and offend him more than you ever did before."

177. "For God," ſaid he, "hath been weary of you for theſe ſeveral years already, becauſe you are none of his; your bawling in his ears hath been no pleaſant voice to him; and therefore he let you ſin this ſin, that you might be quite cut off: and will you pray ſtill." This the devil urged, and ſet forth, that in Numbers, when Moſes ſaid to the children of Iſrael, 'That 'becauſe they would not go up to poſſeſs the 'land, when God would have them; therefore 'for ever did he bar them out from thence, 'though they prayed they might with tears,' *Numb.* xiv. 36, 37, &c.

178. As it is ſaid in another place, *Exod.* xxi. 14. 'The man that ſins preſumptuouſly, 'ſhall be taken from God's altar, that he may 'die;' even as Joab was by King Solomon, when he thought to find ſhelter there, 1 *Kings* ii. 27, 28, &c. Theſe places did pinch me very ſore. Yet my caſe being deſperate, I thought, with myſelf, I can but die; and if it muſt be ſo, it ſhall once be ſaid, 'That ſuch an one died at the foot of Chriſt in prayer.' This I did; but with great difficulty, God doth know, and that becauſe, together with this, ſtill that ſaying about Eſau would be ſet at my heart, even like a flaming ſword, to keep the way of

the tree of life, leſt I ſhould take thereof, and live. Oh! who knows how hard a thing it is to come to God in prayer!

179. I did alſo deſire the prayers of the people of God to me; but I feared that God would give them no heart to do it: yea, I trembled in my ſoul to think, that ſome or other of them would ſhortly tell me, that God had ſaid thoſe words to them that he once did ſay to the prophet concerning the children of Iſrael, 'Pray not for the people, for I have rejected them,' *Jer.* xi. 14. So, 'Pray not for him, for I have rejected him.' Yea, I thought that he had whiſpered this to ſome of them already, only they durſt not tell me ſo: neither durſt I aſk them of it, for fear it ſhould be ſo: it would make me quite beſide myſelf: "Man knows the beginning of ſin," ſaid Spira, "but who bounds the iſſue thereof."

180. About this time I took opportunity to break my mind to an ancient Chriſtian, and told him all my caſe. I told him alſo that I was afraid that I had ſinned the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt. And he told me, "He thought ſo too." Here, therefore, I had but cold comfort; but talking a little more with him, I found him, though a good man, a ſtranger to much combat with the devil. Wherefore I went to God again, as well as I could for mercy ſtill.

181. Now alſo did the tempter begin to mock me in my miſery, ſaying, "That ſeeing I had thus parted with the Lord Jeſus, and provoked him to diſpleaſure, who would have ſtood between my ſoul and the flame of devouring fire; there was now but one way, and that was, To pray that God the Father would be a

mediator between his Son and me, that we might be reconciled again, and that I might have that bleſſed benefit in him that his bleſſed ſaints enjoyed."

182. Then did that ſcripture ſeize upon my ſoul, 'He is of one mind, and who can turn him?' Oh! I ſaw it was as eaſy to perſuade him to make a new world, a new covenant, or a new bible, beſides that we have already, as to pray for ſuch a thing. This was to perſuade him, that what he had done already was mere folly; and perſuade him to alter, yea to diſannual the whole way of ſalvation: And then would that ſaying rend my ſoul aſunder, 'Neither is there ſalvation in any other; for there 'is none other name under heaven given among 'men whereby we muſt be ſaved,' *Acts* iv. 12.

183. Now the moſt free, and full, and gracious words of the goſpel, were the greateſt torment to me; yea, nothing ſo afflicted me as the thoughts of Jeſus Chriſt, the remembrance of a Saviour: becauſe I had caſt him off, brought forth the villainy of my ſin, and my loſs by it, to mind; nothing did twing my conſcience like this. Every thing that I thought of the Lord Jeſus, of his grace, love, goodneſs, kindneſs, gentleneſs, meekneſs, death, blood, promiſes, and bleſſed exhortations, comforts, and conſolation, it went to my ſoul like a ſword: for ſtill unto theſe my conſiderations of the Lord Jeſus, theſe thoughts would make place for themſelves in my heart: "Aye, this is the Jeſus, the loving Saviour, the Son of God whom you have parted with, whom you have ſlighted, deſpiſed and abuſed; this is the only Saviour, the only Redeemer, the only one that

could ſo love ſinners, as to waſh them from their ſins in his own moſt precious blood: but you have no part nor lot in this Jeſus, you have put him from you, you have ſaid in your heart, Let him go if he will. Now therefore you are ſevered from him: you have ſevered yourſelf from him: behold then his goodneſs, but yourſelf to be no partaker of it." Oh, thought I, what have I loſt! what have I parted with! what has diſinherited my poor ſoul! Oh, it is ſad to be deſtroyed by the grace and mercy of God; to have the Lamb, the Saviour, turn lion and deſtroyer, *Rev.* vi. I alſo trembled, as I have ſaid, at the ſight of the ſaints of God; eſpecially at thoſe that greatly loved him, and that made it their buſineſs to walk continually with him in this world: for they did, both in their words, their carriages, and all their expreſſions of tenderneſs, and fear to ſin againſt their precious Saviour, condemn, lay guilt upon, and alſo add continual affliction and ſhame unto my ſoul. 'The dread of them was put 'upon me, and I trembled at God's Samuels,' 1 *Sam.* xvi. 4.

184. Now alſo the tempter began afreſh to mock my ſoul another way, ſaying, "That Chriſt indeed did pity my caſe, and was ſorry for my loſs; but foraſmuch as I had ſinned and tranſgreſſed, as I had done, he could by no means help me, nor ſave me from what I feared; for my ſin was not of the nature of theirs for whom he bled and died; neither was it counted with thoſe that were laid to his charge when he hanged on a tree; therefore, unleſs he ſhould come down from heaven, and die anew for this ſin, though indeed he did greatly pity me, yet I could have no benefit of him." Theſe

things may seem ridiculous to others, even as ridiculous as they were in themselves; but to me they were most tormenting cogitations; every of them augmented my misery, that Jesus Christ should have so much love as to pity me, when yet he could not help me. Nor did I think, that the reason why he could not help me, was, because his merits were weak, or his grace and salvation spent on others already; but because his faithfulness to his threatnings would not let him extend his mercy to me. Besides, I thought, as I have already hinted, that my sin was not within the bounds of that pardon that was wrapped up in a promise; and if not, then I knew surely, that it was more easy for heaven and earth to pass away, than for me to have eternal life. So that the ground of all these fears of mine, did arise from a stedfast belief that I had of the stability of the holy word of God, and also from my being misinformed of the nature of my sin.

185. But, oh! how this would add to my affliction, to conceit that I should be guilty of such a sin, for which he did not die! These thoughts did so confound me, and imprison me, and tie me up from faith, that I knew not what to do: but oh, thought I, that he would come down again! oh, that the work of man's redemption was yet to be done by Christ! how would I pray him, and intreat him, to count and reckon this sin among the rest for which he died! But this scripture would strike me down as dead: 'Christ being raised from the dead, 'dieth no more: death hath no more dominion 'over him,' *Rom.* vi. 9.

186. Thus, by the strange and unusual assaults of the tempter, was my soul like a broken

veſſel, driven as with the winds, and toſſed ſometimes headlong into deſpair, ſometimes upon the covenant of works, and ſometimes to wiſh, that the new covenant, and the condition thereof, might ſo far forth as I thought myſelf concerned, be turned another way and changed. "But in all theſe, I was as thoſe that juſtle againſt the rocks; more broken, ſcattered, and rent." Oh, the unthought of imaginations, frights, fears, and terrors, that are effected by a thorough application of guilt, yielding to deſperation! 'This is the man that 'hath his dwelling among the tombs with the 'dead; that is always crying out, and cutting 'himſelf with ſtones,' *Mark* v. 1, 2, 3. But, I ſay, all in vain; deſperation will not comfort him, the old covenant will not ſave him: nay, heaven and earth ſhall paſs away, before one jot or tittle of the word and law of grace will fail or be removed. This I ſaw, this I felt, and under this I groaned. Yet this advantage I got thereby, namely, a farther confirmation of the certainty of the way of ſalvation, and that the ſcriptures were the word of God. Oh! I cannot now expreſs what I then ſaw and felt, of the ſteadineſs of Jeſus Chriſt, the rock of men's ſalvation: what was done could not be undone, added to, nor altered. I ſaw, indeed, that ſin might drive the ſoul beyond Chriſt, even the ſin which is unpardonable; but woe to him that was ſo driven, for the word would ſhut him out.

187. Thus was I always ſinking, whatever I did think or do. So one day as I walked to a neighbouring town, and ſat down upon a ſettle in the ſtreet, and fell into a very deep pauſe, about the moſt fearful ſtate my ſin had brought

me to; and after long muſing, I lifted up my head; but methought I ſaw, as if the ſun that ſhineth in the heavens did grudge to give light; and as if the very ſtones in the ſtreets and tiles upon the houſes, did bend themſelves againſt me: methought that they all combined together, to baniſh me ought of the world; I was abhorred of them, and to dwell among them, or be partaker of their benefits, becauſe I had ſinned againſt the Saviour. O how happy now was every creature over me! for they ſtood faſt, and kept their ſtation, but I was gone and loſt.

188. Then breaking out in the bitterneſs of my ſoul, I ſaid to my ſoul, with a grievous ſigh, "How can God comfort ſuch a wretch as I am?" I had no ſooner ſaid it, but this returned upon me, as an echo doth anſwer a voice, "This ſin is not unto death." At which I was as if I had been raiſed out of the grave, and cried out again, "Lord, how couldſt thou find out ſuch a was this!" For I was filled with admiration at the fitneſs, and at the unexpectedneſs of the ſentence. The fitneſs of the word; the rightneſs of the timing of it; the power, and ſweetneſs, and light, and glory, that came with it alſo, was marvellous to me to find. I was now, for the time, out of doubt, as to that about which I was ſo much in doubt before. My fears before were that my ſin was not pardonable, and ſo that I had no right to pray, to repent, &c.; or that, if I did, it would be of no advantage or profit to me. But now, thought I, if this ſin is not unto death, then it is pardonable; therefore from this I have encouragement to come to God by Chriſt for mercy; to conſider the promiſe of forgiveneſs, as that which ſtands with open arms to receive

me, as well as others. This therefore was a great eaſement to my mind, to wit, that my ſin was pardonable, that it was not the ſin unto death, 1 *John* v. 16, 17. None but thoſe that know what my trouble, by their own experience, was, can tell what relief came to my ſoul, by this conſideration: it was a releaſe to me from my former bonds, and a ſhelter from my former ſtorms: I ſeemed now to ſtand upon the ſame ground with other ſinners, and to have as good right to the word and prayer as any of them.

189. Now, I ſay, I was in hopes that my ſin was not unpardonable, but that there might be hopes for me to obtain forgiveneſs. But, oh, how Satan did now lay about him, for to bring me down again! But he could by no means do it, neither this day nor the moſt part of the next; for this ſentence ſtood like a mill-poſt at my back. Yet towards the evening of the next day, I felt this word began to leave me, and to withdraw its ſupportation from me, and ſo I returned to my old fears again; but with a great deal of grudging and peeviſhneſs, for I feared the ſorrow of deſpair; nor could my faith now long retain this word.

190. But the next day at evening, being under many fears, I went to ſeek the Lord; and as I prayed, I cried, and my ſoul cried to him in theſe words, with ſtrong cries: "Oh Lord, I beſeech thee ſhew me that thou haſt loved me with everlaſting love." *Jer.* xxxi. 3. I had no ſooner ſaid it, but with ſweetneſs this returned upon me, as an echo, or ſounding again, "I have loved thee with an everlaſting love." Now I went to bed in quiet; alſo when I waked the next morning, it was freſh upon my ſoul; and I believed it.

191. But yet the tempter left me not, for it could not be ſo little as an hundred times, that he, that day, did labour to break my peace. Oh, the combats and conflicts that I did then meet with, as I ſtrove to hold by this word: that of Eſau would fly in my face like lightning: I ſhould be ſometimes up and down twenty times in an hour. Yet God did bear me out, and keep my heart upon this word; from which I had alſo, for ſeveral days together, very much ſweetneſs and comfortable hopes of pardon; for thus it was made unto out me, "I loved thee whilſt thou waſt committing this ſin; I loved thee before, I love thee ſtill, and I will love thee for ever."

192. Yet I ſaw my ſin moſt barbarous, and a filthy crime, and could not but conclude, with great ſhame and aſtoniſhment, that I had horridly abuſed the holy Son of God: wherefore I felt my ſoul greatly to love and pity him, and my bowels to yearn toward him; for I ſaw he was ſtill my friend, and did reward me good for evil; yea, the love and affection that then did burn within to my Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, did work at this time ſuch a ſtrong and hot deſire of revengement upon myſelf, for the abuſe I had done unto him, that to ſpeak as I then thought, had I a thouſand gallons of blood within my veins, I could freely then have ſpilt it all, at the command and feet of this my Lord and Saviour.

193. And as I was muſing, and in my ſtudies, conſidering how to love the Lord, and to expreſs my love to him, that ſaying came in upon me, 'If thou, Lord, ſhouldſt mark 'iniquity, O Lord, who ſhould ſtand; but 'there is forgiveneſs with thee, that thou

'mayſt be feared,' *Pſalm* cxxx. 4. Theſe were good words to me, eſpecially the latter part thereof; to wit, that there is forgiveneſs with the Lord, that he might be feared; that is, as I then underſtood it, that he might be loved, and had in reverence: for it was thus made out to me, "That the great God did ſet ſo high an eſteem upon the love of his poor creatures, that rather than he would go without their love, he would pardon their tranſgreſſion."

194. And now was that word fulfilled on me, and I was alſo refreſhed by it, 'Then ſhall they 'be aſhamed and confounded, and never open 'their mouth any more, becauſe of their ſhame, 'when I am pacified towards them for all that 'they have done, ſaith the Lord God," *Ezek.* xvi. 63. Thus was my ſoul at this time, and as I then did think for ever, ſet at liberty from being afflicted with my former guilt and amazement.

195. But before many weeks were gone, I began to deſpond again, fearing, leſt notwithſtanding all that I had enjoyed, that I might be deceived and deſtroyed at the laſt: for this conſideration came ſtrong into my mind, "That whatſoever comfort and peace I thought I might have from the word of the promiſe of life, yet unleſs there could be found in my refreſhment, a concurrence and agreement in the ſcriptures, let me think what I will thereof, and hold it never ſo faſt, I ſhould find no ſuch thing at the end; for the ſcriptures cannot be broken," *John* x. 35.

196. Now began my heart again to ake, and fear I might meet with a diſappointment at laſt. Wherefore I began with all ſerioufneſs to examine my former comfort, and to conſider, whether one that had ſinned as I had done, might with confidence truſt upon the faithfulneſs of God, laid down in theſe words, by which I had been com-

forted, and on which I had leaned myſelf? but now were brought to my mind: "For it is impoſſible for thoſe who were once enlightened, and have taſted the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, and have taſted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they ſhall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance," *Heb.* vi. "For if we ſin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more ſacrifice for ſin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which ſhall devour the adverſaries," *Heb.* x. "Even as Eſau, who for one morſel of meat ſold his birthright. For you know how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the bleſſing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he ſought it carefully with tears," *Heb.* xii.

197. Now was the word of the goſpel forced from my ſoul; ſo that no promiſe or encouragement was to be found in the Bible for me: and now would that ſaying work upon my ſpirit to afflict me, "Rejoice not, O Iſrael, for joy, as other people," *Hoſ.* ix. 1. For I ſaw, indeed, there was cauſe of rejoicing for thoſe that held to Jeſus: but as for me I had cut myſelf off by my tranſgreſſions, and left myſelf neither foot-hold, nor hand-hold, among all the ſtays and props in the precious word of life.

198. And truly I did now feel myſelf to ſink into a gulf, as an houſe whoſe foundation is deſtroyed. I did liken myſelf in this condition unto the caſe of a child that was fallen into a mill-pit, who tho' it could make ſome ſhift to ſcrabble and ſprawl in the water, yet becauſe it could find neither hold for hand nor foot, therefore at laſt it muſt die in that condition. So ſoon as this freſh aſſault had faſtened on my ſoul, that ſcrip-

ture came into my heart, 'This for many days,' *Dan.* x. 14. And indeed I found it was so, for I could not be delivered, nor brought to peace again, until well nigh two years and a half were completely finished. Wherefore these words, though in themselves they tended to discouragement, yet to me, who feared this condition would be eternal, they were sometimes as an help and refreshment to me.

199. For thought I, 'many days' are not for ever; 'many days' will have an end; therefore seeing I was to be afflicted, not a few, but many days, yet I was glad it was but for many days. Thus, I say, I could recall myself sometimes, and give myself an help; for as soon as ever the words came into my mind at first, I knew my trouble would be long: yet this would be but sometimes; for I could not always think on this, nor ever be helped by it though I did.

200. Now, while these scriptures lay before me, and laid sin anew at my door, that saying in *Luke* xviii. 1. with others, did encourage me to prayer. Then the tempter again laid at me very fore, suggesting, "That neither the mercy of God, nor yet the blood of Christ, did at all concern me, nor could they help me for my sin; therefore it was but in vain to pray." Yet, thought I, "I will pray." "But," said the tempter, "your sin is unpardonable." "Well," said I, "I will pray." "It is to no boot," said he. "Yet," said I, "I will pray." So I went to prayer to God; and while I was at prayer, I uttered words to this effect: "Lord, Satan tells me, that neither thy mercy, nor Christ's blood, is sufficient to save my soul: Lord, shall I honour thee most by believing thou wilt and canst? or him, by believing thou neither wilt nor canst?

Lord, I would fain honour thee, by believing thou wilt and canſt."

201. And as I was thus before the Lord, that ſcripture faſtened on my heart, 'O man, great is thy faith,' *Matth.* xv. 27. even as if one had clapped me on the back, as I was on my knees before God. Yet I was not able to believe this, that this was a prayer of faith, till almoſt ſix months after: for I could not think that I had faith, or that there ſhould be a word for me to act faith on: therefore I ſhould ſtill be as ſticking in the jaws of deſperation, and went mourning up and down in a ſad condition.

202. There was nothing now that I longed for more than to be put out of doubt as to this thing in queſtion; and as I was vehemently deſirous to know if there was indeed hope for me, theſe words came rolling into my mind: 'Will the Lord caſt off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promiſe fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger ſhut up his tender mercies?' *Pſalm* lxxvii. 7, 8, 9. And all that while they run in my mind, methought I had ſtill this as the anſwer: "It is a queſtion whether he hath or no; it may be he hath not." Yea, the interrogatory ſeemed to me to carry in it a ſure affirmation, that indeed he had not, nor would, ſo caſt off, but would be favourable; that his promiſe doth not fail; and that he hath not forgotten to be gracious, nor would in anger ſhut up his tender mercy. Something alſo there was upon my heart at the ſame time, which I now cannot call to mind, which, with this text, did ſweeten my heart, and make me conclude, that his mercy might not be quite gone, nor gone for ever.

203. At another time I remember I was again

much under this queſtion, "Whether the blood of Chriſt was ſufficient to ſave my ſoul?" In which doubt I continued from morning till about ſeven or eight at night; and at laſt, when I was, as it were quite worn out with fear, leſt it ſhould not lay hold on me, theſe words did ſound ſuddenly within my heart, 'He is able.' But methought this word Able was ſpoke loud unto me; it ſhewed a great word; it ſeemed to be writ in great letters, and gave ſuch a juſtle to my fear and doubt, (I mean for the time it tarried with me, which was about a day), as I never had from that all my life, either before or after, *Heb.* vii. 25.

204. But one morning as I was again at prayer, and trembling under the fear of this, "That no word of God could help me," that piece of a ſentence darted in upon me, 'My grace is ſufficient.' At this methought I felt ſome ſtay, as if there might be hopes. But oh! how good a thing it is for God to ſend his word! For about a fortnight before I was looking on this very place, and then I thought it could not come near my ſoul with comfort; therefore I threw down my book in a pet. Then I thought it was not large enough for me; no, not large enough; but now it was as if it had arms of grace ſo wide, that it could not only incloſe me, but many more beſides.

205. By theſe words I was ſuſtained; yet not without exceeding conflicts, for the ſpace of ſeven or eight weeks; for my peace would be in it, and out, ſometimes twenty times in a day; comfort now, and trouble preſently; peace now, and before I could go a furlong, as full of fear and guilt as ever heart could hold: and this was not only now and then, but my whole ſeven weeks experience: for this about the ſufficiency of grace, and that of Eſau's parting with his birthright, would be like a pair of ſcales within my

mind; ſometimes one end would be uppermoſt, and ſometimes again the other; according to which would be my peace or troubles.

206. Therefore I did ſtill pray to God that he would come in with this ſcripture, more fully on my heart, to wit, that he would help me to apply the whole ſentence; for as yet I could not: that he gave, that I gathered: but farther I could not go; for as yet it only helped me to hope there might be mercy for me, 'My grace is ſufficient:' and tho' it came no farther, it anſwered my former queſtion, to wit, that there was hope; yet becauſe *for thee* was left out, I was not contented, but prayed to God for that alſo. Wherefore, one day, when I was in a meeting of God's people, full of ſadneſs and terror, for my fears again were ſtrong upon me, and as I was now thinking my ſoul was never the better, but my caſe moſt ſad and fearful, theſe words did with great power ſuddenly break in upon me: 'My grace is ſufficient for thee! My grace is ſufficient for thee! My grace is ſufficient for thee,' three times together; and, oh! methought that every word was a mighty word unto me, as My, and Grace, and Sufficient and For thee; they were then, and ſometimes are ſtill, far bigger than others be.

207. At which time my underſtanding was ſo enlightened, that I was as though I had ſeen the Lord Jeſus look down from heaven thro' the tiles upon me, and direct theſe words unto me. This ſent me mourning home; it broke my heart, and filled me full of joy, and laid me low as the duſt: only it ſtaid not long with me, I mean in this glory and refreſhing comfort; yet it continued with me for ſeveral weeks, and did encourage me to hope. But as ſoon as that powerful operation of it was taken from my heart, that other

about Eſau returned upon me as before; ſo my ſoul did hang as in a pair of ſcales again, ſometimes up and ſometimes down, now in peace, and anon again in terror.

208. Thus I went on for many weeks, ſometimes comforted, and ſometimes tormented; and eſpecially at ſometimes my torment would be very ſore; for all thoſe ſcriptures forenamed in the Hebrews would be ſet before me, as the only ſentences that would keep me out of heaven. Then again I ſhould begin to repent that ever that thought went through me; I ſhould alſo think thus with myſelf: "Why, how many ſcriptures are there againſt me? There are but three or four, and cannot God miſs them, and ſave me for all them?" Sometimes again I ſhould think, "Oh, if it were not for theſe three or four words, now how might I be comforted?" And I could hardly forbear at ſome times but to wiſh them out of the book.

209. Then methought I ſhould ſee as if both Peter, and Paul, and John, and all the writers, did look with ſcorn upon me, and hold me in deriſion; and as if they ſaid unto me, "All our words are truth; one of as much force as the other. It is not we that have cut you off; but you have caſt away yourſelf. There is none of our ſentences that you muſt take hold upon but theſe, and ſuch as theſe, it is impoſſible" 'There remains no more ſacrifice for ſin;' *Heb.* vi. and, 'It had been better for them not to have known the will of God, than after they had known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them:' *Heb.* x. 'For the ſcriptures cannot be broken;' 2 *Pet.* ii. 21.

210. Theſe are the elders of the city of refuge, I ſaw, were to be judges both of my caſe and me, while I ſtood with the avenger of blood at my

heels, trembling at their gate for deliverance, alſo with a thouſand fears and miſtruſts, I doubted that he would ſhut me out for ever, *Joſh.* xx. 3,4.

211. Thus I was confounded, not knowing what to do, nor how to be ſatisfied in this queſtion, "Whether the ſcriptures could agree in the ſalvation of my ſoul?" I quaked at the Apoſtles; I knew their words were true, and that they muſt ſtand for ever.

212. And I remember one day, as I was in diverſe frames of ſpirit, and conſidering that theſe frames were according to the nature of ſeveral ſcriptures that came in upon my mind; if this of grace, then was I quiet; but if that of Eſau, then tormented. "Lord, thought I, if both theſe ſcriptures would meet in my heart at once, I wonder which of them would get the better of me." So methought I had a long mind that they might come both together upon me: yea, I deſired of God they might.

213. Well, about two or three days after, ſo they did indeed: they bolted both upon me at a time, and did work and ſtruggle ſtrangely in me for a while: at laſt that in Eſau's birthright began to wax weak, and withdraw and vaniſh; and this about the ſufficiency of grace prevailed with peace and joy. And as I was in a muſe about this, that ſcripture came home upon me, 'Mercy rejoiceth over judgment,' *James* ii. 13.

214. This was a wonderment to me; yet truly I am apt to think it was of God; for the word of the law and wrath muſt give place, to the word of life and grace; becauſe though the word of condemnation be glorious, yet the word of life and ſalvation doth far exceed in glory, 2 *Cor.* iii. 8—12. *Mark* ix. 5, 6, 8. *John* vi. 37. alſo that Moſes and Elias muſt both vaniſh, and leave Chriſt and his ſaints alone.

215. This ſcripture did alſo moſt ſweetly viſit my ſoul, 'And him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out.' Oh, the comfort that I had from this word, 'in no wiſe!' as who ſhould ſay, 'by no means, for nothing whatever he hath done.' But Satan would greatly labour to pull this promiſe from me, telling of me, "That Chriſt did not mean me, and ſuch as I, but ſinners of a lower rank, that had not done as I had done." But I ſhould anſwer him again, 'Satan, here is in theſe words no ſuch exception; but him that comes, him, any him, him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out.' And thus I will remember ſtill, that of all the ſlights that Satan uſed to take this ſcripture from me, yet he never did ſo much as put this queſtion, "But do you come aright?" And I have thought the reaſon was, becauſe he thought I knew full well what coming aright was; for I ſaw, that to come aright, was to come as I was, a vile and ungodly ſinner, and ſo caſt myſelf at the feet of mercy, condemning myſelf for ſin. If ever Satan and I did ſtrive for any word of God in all my life, it was for this good word of Chriſt; he at one end, and I at the other. Oh, what work we made! It was for this in John, I ſay, that we did ſo tug and ſtrive; he pulled, and I pulled: but God be praiſed, I overcame him, I got ſweetneſs from it.

216. But, notwithſtanding all theſe helps and bleſſed words of grace, yet that of Eſau's ſelling of his birthright would ſtill at times diſtreſs my conſcience; for though I had been moſt ſweetly comforted, and that but juſt before; yet when that came into my mind, it would make me fear again I could not be quite rid thereof; it would every day be with me; wherefore now I went another way to work, even to conſider the nature of this blaſphemous thought, I mean, if I ſhould

take the words at the largeſt, and give them their own natural force and ſcope; even every word therein: ſo when I had thus conſidered, I found that if they were fairly taken, they would amount to this, "That I had freely left the Lord Jeſus Chriſt to his choice, whether he would be my Saviour or no;" for the wicked words were theſe, 'Let him go if he well.' Then that ſcripture gave me hope, 'I will never leave thee nor forſake thee,' *Heb.* xiii. 5. "O Lord, ſaid I, but I have left thee." Then it anſwered again, 'But I will not leave thee.' For this I thanked God alſo.

217. Yet I was grievouſly afraid he ſhould, and found it exceeding hard to truſt him, ſeeing I had ſo offended him. I could have been exceeding glad that this thought had never befallen; for then I thought I could, with more eaſe, and freedom abundance, have leaned on his grace. I ſee it was with me as it was with Joſeph's brethren: the guilt of their own wickedneſs did often fill them with fears, that their brother would at laſt deſpiſe them, *Gen.* l. 15, 16, &c.

218. Yet above all the ſcriptures that I yet did meet with, that in Joſhua xx. was the greateſt comfort to me, which ſpeaks of the ſlayer that was to flee for refuge: 'And if the avenger of blood purſue the ſlayer, then,' ſaith Moſes, 'they 'that are the elders of the city of refuge ſhall 'not deliver him into his hand, becauſe he ſmote 'his neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not 'aforetimes.' O, bleſſed be God for this word; I was convinced that I was the ſlayer; and that the avenger of blood purſued me, I felt with great terror; only now it remained that I enquire whether I have right to enter the city of refuge. So I found that he muſt not 'who lay in wait to ſhed blood:' It was not the Wilful murderer but he who Unwittingly did it; he who did

unawares; not out of ſpite, or grudge, or malice; he that ſhed it unwittingly: even he who did not hate his neighbour before.' Wherefore,

219. I thought verily I was the man that muſt enter, becauſe I had ſmitten my neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not aforetime.' I hated him not aforetimes; no, I prayed unto him, was tender of ſinning againſt him, yea and againſt his wicked temptation I had ſtrove for twelve months before; yea, and alſo when it did paſs thro' my heart, it did in ſpite of my teeth: wherefore I thought I had right to enter this city; and the elders, which are the apoſtles, were not to deliver me up. This therefore was great comfort to me, and did give me much ground of hope.

220. Yet being very critical, for my ſmart had made me that I knew not what ground was ſure enough to bear me, I had one queſtion that my ſoul did much deſire to be reſolved about; and that was, "Whether it be poſſible for any ſoul that hath indeed ſinned the unpardonable ſin, yet after that to receive tho' but the leaſt true ſpiritual comfort from God thro' Chriſt?" The which, after I had much conſidered, I found the anſwer was, No, they could not, and that for theſe reaſons:

221. Firſt, Becauſe thoſe that have ſinned that ſin, they are debarred a ſhare in the blood of Chriſt; and, being ſhut out of that, they muſt needs be void of the leaſt grounds of hope, and of ſpiritual comfort; 'For to ſuch there remains no more ſacrifice for ſin,' *Heb.* x. 26, 27. Secondly, Becauſe they are denied a ſhare in the promiſe of life: 'they ſhall never be forgiven, either in this world, nor in that which is to come," *Matth.* xii. 31. Thirdly, The Son of God excludes them alſo from a ſhare in his bleſſed interceſſion, being for ever aſhamed to own

them both before his holy Father, and the bleſſed angels in heaven.' *Mark* viii.

222. When I had with much deliberation conſidered of this matter, and could not but conclude that the Lord had comforted me, and that too after this my wicked ſin: then, methought I durſt venture to come nigh unto thoſe moſt fearful and terrible ſcriptures, with which all this while I had been ſo greatly affrighted, and on which, indeed, before I durſt ſcarce caſt mine eye, (yea, had much ado an hundred times to forbear waſhing them out of the Bible): for I thought they would deſtroy me; but now, I ſay, I began to take ſome meaſures of encouragement, to come cloſe to them, to read them and conſider them, and to weigh their ſcope and tendency.

223. The which when I began to do, I found my viſage changed: for they looked not ſo grimly as before I thought they did: And, Firſt, I came to the 6th of the Hebrews, yet trembling, for fear it ſhould ſtrike me; which, when I had conſidered, I found, that the falling there intended, was a falling quite away; that is, as I conceived, a falling from, and an abſolute denying of the goſpel, of remiſſion of ſins by Jeſus Chriſt; for, from them the apoſtle begins his argument, *ver.* 1, 2, 3. Secondly, I found that this falling away muſt be openly, even in the view of the world, even ſo as 'to put Chriſt to an open ſhame.' Thirdly, I found that thoſe he there intended, were for ever ſhut up of God, both in blindneſs, hardneſs, and impenitency: It is impoſſible they ſhould be renewed again unto repentance.' By all theſe particulars I found, to God's everlaſting praiſe, my ſin was not the ſin in this place intended.

Firſt, I confeſſed I was fallen, but not fallen away; that is, from the profeſſion of faith in Jeſus unto eternal life.

Secondly, I confeſſed that I had put Jeſus Chriſt to ſhame by my ſin, but not to open ſhame; I did not deny him before men, nor condemn him as a fruitleſs one before the world.

Thirdly, Nor did I find that God had ſhut me up, or denied me to come, though I found it hard work indeed to come, to him by ſorrow and repentance. Bleſſed be God for unſearchable grace.

224. Then I conſidered that in the 10th of the Hebrews; and found that the wilful ſin there mentioned, is not every wilful ſin, but that which doth throw off Chriſt and then his commandments too. Secondly, That muſt be done alſo openly, before two or three witneſſes, to anſwer that of the law, verſe 28. Thirdly, This ſin cannot be committed but with great deſpite done to the Spirit of Grace, deſpiſing both the diſſuaſions from that ſin, and the perſuaſions to the contrary. But the Lord knows, tho' this my ſin was deviliſh, yet it did not amount to theſe.

225. And as touching that in the 12th of the Hebrews, about Eſau ſelling of his birthright; though this was that which killed me, and ſtood like a ſpear againſt me; yet now I did conſider, 1ſt, That this was not a haſty thought againſt the continual labour of his mind, but a thought conſented to, and put in practice likewiſe, and that after ſome deliberation, *Gen.* xxv. 2dly, It was a public and open action, even before his brother, if not before many more: This made his ſin of a more heinous nature than otherwiſe it would have been. 3dly, He continued to ſlight his birthright: 'He did eat and drink, and went his way; thus Eſau deſpiſed his birthright.' Yea, twenty years after he was found to deſpiſe it ſtill: "And Eſau ſaid, I have enough, my brother, keep that thou haſt thyſelf;' *Gen.* xxxiii. 9.

226. Now, as touching this, that 'Eſau ſought a place of repentance,' thus I thought, 1ſt, This was not for the birthright; but the bleſſing. This is clear from the apoſtle; and is diſtinguiſhed by Eſau himſelf: 'He hath taken away my birthright,' (that is formerly) 'and now he hath taken away my bleſſing alſo,' *Gen.* xxvii. 36. 2dly, Now, this being thus conſidered, I came again to the apoſtle, to ſee what might be the mind of God in a New Teſtament ſtyle and ſenſe, concerning Eſau's ſin; and, ſo far as I could conceive, this was the mind of God, that the birthright ſignified Regeneration, and the bleſſing the eternal inheritance: for ſo the apoſtle ſeems to hint, 'Leſt there be any profane perſon as Eſau, who for a morſel of meat ſold his birthright': as if he ſhould ſay, that ſhall caſt off all thoſe bleſſed beginnings of God, that at preſent are upon him, in order to a new birth leſt they become as Eſau, even be rejected afterwards, when they ſhould inherit the bleſſing.

227. For many there are, who, in the day of grace and mercy, deſpiſe thoſe things which are indeed the birthright to heaven, who yet, when the declining day appear, will cry as Eſau, 'Lord, Lord, open to us:' but then, as Iſaac could not repent, no more will God the Father, but will ſay, 'I have bleſſed thee, yea, and they ſhall be bleſſed; but as for you, Depart, you are workers of iniquity,' *Gen.* xxvii. 32. *Luke* xiii. 25,26,27.

228. When I had thus conſidered theſe ſcriptures, and found, that thus to underſtand them was not againſt, but according to other ſcriptures, this ſtill added further to my encouragement and comfort, and alſo gave a great blow to that objection, to wit, "That the ſcripture could not agree in the ſalvation of my ſoul." And now remained only the hinder part of the tempeſt; for

the thunder was gone beyoned me, only ſome drops did ſtill remain that now and then would fall upon me; but becauſe my former frights and anguiſh were very ſore and deep, therefore it oft befel me ſtill, as it befalleth thoſe that have been ſcared with fire, I thought every voice was Fire! Fire! every little touch would hurt my tender conſcience.

229. But one day as I was paſſing into the field, and that too with ſome daſhes on my conſcience, fearing leſt yet all was not right, ſuddenly this ſentence fell upon my ſoul, 'Thy righteouſneſs is in heaven;' and methought withal, I ſaw with the eyes of my ſoul, Jeſus Chriſt at God's right hand; there, I ſay, as my righteouſneſs; ſo that wherever I was, or whatever I was doing, God could not ſay of me, "He wants my righteouſneſs;" for that was juſt before him. I alſo ſaw, moreover, that it was not my good frame of heart that made my righteouſneſs better, nor yet my bad frame that made my righteouſneſs worſe; for my righteouſneſs was Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, 'The ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever,' *Heb.* xiii. 8.

230. Now did my chains fall off my legs indeed: I was looſed from my afflictions and irons, my temptations alſo fled away: ſo that from that time, thoſe dreadful ſcriptures of God left off to trouble me. Now went I alſo home rejoicing, for the grace and love of God. So when I came home, I looked to ſee if I could find that ſentence, 'Thy righteouſneſs is in heaven,' but could not find ſuch a ſaying; wherefore my heart began to ſink again, only that was brought to my remembrance, 1 *Cor.* i. 33. 'He is made unto us of God, wiſdom, righteouſneſs,

ſanctification, and redemption; by this word I ſaw the other ſentence true.

231. For by this ſcripture I ſaw, that the man Chriſt Jeſus, as he is diſtinct from us as touching his bodily preſence, ſo he is our righteouſneſs and ſanctification before God. Here therefore I lived, for ſome time, very ſweetly at peace with God through Chriſt. Oh methought, Chriſt! Chriſt! there was nothing but Chriſt that was before my eyes; I was not now only for looking upon this and the other benefit of Chriſt apart, as of his blood, burial, or reſurrection, but conſidering him as a whole Chriſt! as he in whom all theſe, and all other his virtues, relations, offices and operations met together, and that he ſat on the right hand of God in heaven.

232. 'Twas glorious to me to ſee his exaltation, and the worth and prevalence of all his benefits, and that becauſe now I could look from myſelf to him, and ſhould reckon, that all thoſe graces of God that now were green on me, were yet but like thoſe cracked groats and fourpence-halfpennies that rich men carry in their purſes, when their gold is in their trunks at home. Oh, I ſaw my gold was in my trunk at home! in Chriſt my Lord and Saviour! Now Chriſt was all; all my wiſdom, all my righteouſneſs, all my ſanctification, and all my redemption.

233. Further, the Lord did alſo lead me into the myſtery of union with the Son of God, that I was joined to him, that I was fleſh of his fleſh, and bone of his bone; and now was that a ſweet word to me, in *Eph.* v. 30. By this alſo was my faith in him, as my righteouſneſs, the more confirmed in me; for if he and I were one, then his righteouſneſs was mine, his merits mine, his victory alſo mine. Now could I ſee myſelf in heaven and earth at once; in heaven by my Chriſt,

by my head, by my righteouſneſs and life, though on earth by body or perſon.

234. Now I ſaw Chriſt Jeſus was looked on of God, and ſhould alſo be looked upon by us, as that common or public perſon in whom all the whole body of his elect are always to be conſidered and reckoned; that we fulfilled the law by him, died by him, roſe from the dead by him, got the victory over ſin, death, the devil, and hell, by him; when he died, we died. And ſo of his reſurrection: "Thy dead men ſhall live together, with my dead body ſhall they ariſe," ſaith he, *Iſa.* xxvi. And again, "After two days he will revive us, and the third day we ſhall live in his ſight;" *Hoſ.* vi. 2. Which is now fulfilled by the ſitting down of the Son of Man on the right hand of the Majeſty in the heavens, according to that to the Epheſians, "He hath raiſed us up together, and made us ſit together in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus," *Eph.* ii. 6.

235. Ah! theſe bleſſed conſiderations and ſcriptures, with many other of like nature, were in thoſe days made to ſpangle in mine eye; ſo that I have cauſe to ſay, "Praiſe ye the Lord God in his ſanctuary; praiſe him in the firmament of his power; praiſe him for his mighty acts; praiſe him according to his excellent greatneſs,' *Pſalm* cv. 1, 2.

236. Having thus in a few words given you a taſte of the ſorrow and affliction that my ſoul went under, by the guilt and terror that thus my wicked thought did lay me under; and having given you alſo a touch of my deliverance therefrom, and of the ſweet and bleſſed comfort that I met with afterwards, which comfort dwelt about a twelvemonth with my heart, to my unſpeakable admiration; I will now (God willing)

before I proceed any further, give you in a word or two, what, as I conceive, was the cauſe of this temptation; and alſo after that, what advantage, at the laſt, it became unto my ſoul.

237. For the cauſes I conceived they were principally two: of which two I was deeply convinced all the time this trouble lay upon me. The firſt was, for that I did not, when I was delivered from the temptations, that went before, ſtill pray to God to keep me from temptations that were to come; for though, as I can ſay in truth, my ſoul was much in prayer before this trial ſeized me; yet then I prayed only, or at the moſt, principally for the removal of preſent troubles, and for freſh diſcoveries of his love in Chriſt: which I ſaw afterwards was not enough to do; I alſo ſhould have prayed, that the great God would keep me from the evil that was to come.

238. Of this I was made deeply ſenſible by the prayer of holy David, who, when he was under preſent mercy, yet prayed, that God would hold him back from ſin and temptation to come "For then," ſaith he, "ſhall I be upright, and I ſhall be innocent from the great tranſgreſſion." *Pſalm* xix. 13. By this very word was I galled and condemned quite through this long temptation.

239. This alſo was a word that did much condemn me for my folly in the neglect of this duty, *Heb.* iv. 16. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." This I had not done; therefore was not ſuffered to ſin and fall, according to what is written, "Pray, that ye enter not into temptation." And truly this very thing is to this day of ſuch weight and awe upon me, that I dare not when

I come before the Lord, go off my knees until I intreat him for help and mercy againſt the temptations that are to come; and I do beſeech thee, reader, that thou learn to beware of my negligence, by the afflictions that for this thing I did for days and months, and years, with ſorrow undergo.

240. Another cauſe of this temptation was, that I had tempted God; and in this manner did I do it; Upon a time my wife was great with child, and before her full time was come, her pangs, as of a woman in travail, were fierce and ſtrong upon her, even as if ſhe would have immediately fallen in labour, and been delivered of an untimely birth. Now at this very time it was, that I had been ſo ſtrongly tempted to queſtion the being of God; wherefore, as my wife lay crying by me, I ſaid, but with all ſecrecy imaginable, even thinking in my heart, "Lord, if now thou wilt remove this ſad affliction from my wife, and cauſe that ſhe be troubled no more therewith this night, (and now were her pangs juſt upon her), then I ſhall know that thou canſt diſcern the moſt ſecret thoughts of the heart."

241. I had no ſooner ſaid it in my heart, but her pangs were taken from her, and ſhe was caſt into a deep ſleep, and ſo continued till morning. At this I greatly marvelled, not knowing what to think: but after I had been awake a good while, and heard her cry no more, I fell to ſleep alſo: ſo when I awaked in the morning, it came upon me again, even what I had ſaid in my heart the laſt night, and how the Lord had ſhewed me, that he knew my ſecret thoughts; which was a great aſtoniſhment unto me for ſeveral weeks after.

242. Well, about a year and a half afterwards, that wicked ſinful thought, of which I have ſpoken before, went through my wicked heart, even

this thought, "Let Chriſt go if he will;" ſo when I was fallen under guilt for this, the remembrance of any other thought, and of the effect thereof, would alſo come upon me with this retort, which alſo carried rebuke along with it, "Now you may ſee that God doth know the moſt ſecret thoughts of the heart."

243. And with this, that of the paſſages that were betwixt the Lord and his ſervant Gideon fell upon my ſpirit; how becauſe that Gideon tempted God with his fleece, both wet and dry, when he ſhould have believed and ventured upon his word: therefore the Lord did afterwards ſo try him, as to ſend him againſt an innumerable company of enemies; and that too, as to outward appearance, without any ſtrength, or help, *Judg.* vi. 7. Thus he ſerved me, and that juſtly; for I ſhould have believed his word, and not to have put an If upon the all-ſeeing God.

244. And now, to ſhew you ſome of the advantages that I alſo have gained by this temptation: And, firſt, by this I was made continually to poſſeſs in my ſoul a very wonderful ſenſe, both of the bleſſing and glory of God, and of his beloved Son. In the temptation that went before, my ſoul was perplexed with unbelief, blaſphemy, hardneſs of heart, queſtions about the being of God, Chriſt, the truth of the word, and certainty of the world to come; I ſay, then I was greatly aſſaulted, and tormented with Atheiſm; but now the caſe was otherwiſe; now was God and Chriſt continually before my face, though not in a way of comfort, but in a way of exceeding dread and terror. The glory of the holineſs of God did at this time break me to pieces; and the bowels and compaſſion of Chriſt did break me as on the wheel; for I could not conſider him but as a loſt and rejected Chriſt, the remem-

brance of which was as the continual breaking of my bones.

245. The ſcriptures alſo were wonderful things unto me; I ſaw that the truth and verity of them were the keys of the kingdom of heaven; thoſe that the ſcriptures favour, they muſt inherit bliſs; but thoſe that they oppoſe and condemn, muſt periſh for evermore. Oh! this word, 'For the ſcriptures cannot be broken,' would rend the caul of my heart; and ſo would that other, 'Whoſe ſins ye remit, they are remitted; but whoſe ſins ye retain, they are retained.'—Now I ſaw the apoſtles to be the elders of the city of refuge, *Joſh.* xx. 4. thoſe that they were to receive in, were received to life; but thoſe that they ſhut out, were to be ſlain by the avenger of blood.

246. Oh! one ſentence of the ſcripture did more afflict and terrify my mind, I mean thoſe ſentences that ſtood againſt me, as ſometimes I thought they every one did, more, I ſay, than an army of 40,000 men that might come againſt me. Wo be to him againſt whom the ſcriptures bend themſelves.

247. By this temptation I was made to ſee more into the nature of the promiſes than ever I was before; for I lying now trembling under the mighty hand of God, continually torn and rent by the thundering of his juſtice, this made me, with careful heart, and watchful eye, with great fearfulneſs, to turn over every leaf, and with much diligence, mixed with trembling, to conſider every ſentence, together with its natural force and latitude.

248. By this temptation alſo I was greatly holden off my former fooliſh practice, of putting by the word of promiſe when it came into my mind; for now, though I could not ſuck that comfort

and ſweetneſs from the promiſe as I had done at other times; yet, like to a man ſinking, I ſhould catch at all I ſaw. Formerly I thought I might not meddle with the promiſe, unleſs I felt its comfort; but now it was no time thus to do; the avenger of blood too hardly did purſue me.

249. Now therefore was I glad to catch at that word, which yet I feared I had no ground or right to; and even to leap into the boſom of that promiſe that yet I feared did ſhut its heart againſt me. Now alſo I ſhould labour to take the word as God hath laid it down, without reſtraining the natural force of one ſyllable thereof: O! what did I now ſee in that bleſſed 6th of John, 'And him that comes to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out,' *John* vi. 37. Now I began to conſider with myſelf, that God hath a bigger mouth to ſpeak with, than I had a heart to conceive with: I thought alſo with myſelf, that he ſpake not his words in haſte, or in an unadviſed heat; but with infinite wiſdom and judgment, and in very truth and faithfulneſs, 2 *Sam.* iii. 28.

250. I ſhould in thoſe days, often in my greateſt agonies, even flounce towards the promiſe, as the horſes do towards ſound ground that yet ſtick in the mire; concluding, though as one almoſt bereft of his wits through fear, on this I will reſt and ſtay, and leave the fulfilling of it to the God of heaven that made it. Oh! many a pull hath my heart had with Satan, for that bleſſed 6th of John: it did not now, as at other times, look principally for comfort, though, O how welcome would it have been unto me! but now a word, a word, to lean a weary ſoul upon, that it might not ſink for ever! it was that I hunted for.

251. Yea, often when I have been making to the promiſe, I have ſeen as if the Lord would

refuſe my ſoul for ever: I was often as if I had run upon the pikes, and as if the Lord had thruſt at me, to keep me from him, as with a flaming ſword. Then ſhould I think of Eſther, who went to petition the king contrary to the law, *Eſther* iv. 16. I thought alſo of Benhadad's ſervants, who went with ropes upon their heads to their enemies for mercy, 1 *Kings* xx. 31, &c. The woman of Canaan alſo, that would not be daunted, though called dog by Chriſt, *Mat.* xv. 22, &c. and the man that went to borrow bread at midnight, *Luke* xi. 5, 6, 7, 8, &c. were great encouragements unto me.

252. I never ſaw thoſe heights and depths in grace, and love, and mercy, as I ſaw after this temptation: great ſins do draw out great grace; and where guilt is moſt terrible and fierce, there the mercy of God in Chriſt, when ſhewed to the ſoul, appears moſt high and mighty. When Job had paſſed through his captivity, "He had twice as much as he had before," *Job* xliv. 10. Bleſſed be God for Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Many other things I might here make obſervation of; but I would be brief, and therefore ſhall at this time omit them; and do pray God, that my harms may make others fear to offend, leſt they alſo be made to bear the iron yoke as I did.

I had, two or three times at or about my deliverance from this temptation, ſuch ſtrange apprehenſions of the grace of God, that I could hardly bear up under it; it was ſo out of meaſure amazing, when I thought it could reach me, that I do think, if that ſenſe of it had abode long upon me, it would have made me incapable for buſineſs.

253. Now I ſhall go forward to give you a relation of other of the Lord's dealings with me, at ſundry other ſeaſons, and of the temptations I then

meet withal. I ſhall begin with what I met with when I firſt did join in fellowſhip with the people of God at Bedford. After I had propounded to the church, that my deſire was to walk in the order and ordinances of Chriſt with them, and was alſo admitted by them; while I thought of that bleſſed ordinance of Chriſt, which was his laſt ſupper, with his diſciples before his death, that ſcripture, "Do this in remembrance of me," *Luke* xxii. 19. was made a very precious word under me; for by it the Lord did come upon my conſcience with the diſcovery of his death for my ſins; and, as I then felt, did as if he plunged me in the virtue of the ſame. But, behold! I had not been long a partaker at that ordinance, but ſuch fierce and ſad temptations did attend me at all times therein, both to blaſpheme the ordinance, and to wiſh ſome deadly thing to thoſe that did then eat thereof: that leſt I ſhould at any time be guilty of conſenting to the wicked and fearful thoughts, I was forced to bend myſelf all the while, to pray to God to keep me from ſuch blaſphemies; and alſo to cry to God to bleſs the bread and cup to them, as it were from mouth to mouth. The reaſon of this temptation I have thought ſince, was becauſe I did not, with that reverence as became me, at firſt approach to partake thereof.

254. Thus I continued for three quarters of a year, and could never have reſt nor eaſe: but at laſt the Lord came in upon my ſoul with that ſame ſcripture by which my ſoul was viſited before; and after that I have been uſually very well and comfortable in the partaking of that bleſſed ordinance, and have therein diſcerned the Lord's body, as broken for my ſins, and that his precious blood hath been ſhed for my tranſgreſſions.

255. Upon a time I was ſomething inclined to

a conſumption; wherewith about the ſpring, I was ſuddenly and violently ſeized with much weakneſs in my outward man, inſomuch that I thought I could not live. Now began I afreſh to give myſelf up to a ſerious examination after my ſtate and condition for the future, and of my evidences for that bleſſed world to come: for it hath, I bleſs the name of God, been my uſual courſe, as always, ſo eſpecially in the day of affliction, to endeavour to keep my intereſt in the life to come clear before mine eyes.

256. But I had no ſooner begun to recal to mind my former experience of the goodneſs of God to my ſoul, but there came flocking into my mind an innumerable company of my ſins and tranſgreſſions; amongſt which theſe were at this time moſt to my affliction, namely, my deadneſs, dullneſs, and coldneſs in my holy duties; my wanderings of heart, my weariſomeneſs in all good things, my want of love to God, his ways and people, with this at the end of all, "Are theſe the fruits of Chriſtianity: Are theſe the tokens of a bleſſed man?"

257. At the apprehenſions of theſe things, my ſickneſs was doubled upon me: for now I was ſick in my inward man; my ſoul was clogged with guilt: now alſo was my former experience of God's goodneſs to me quite taken out of my mind, and hid as if they had never been or ſeen. Now was my ſoul greatly pinched between theſe two conſiderations, "Live I muſt not, die I dare not." Now I ſunk and fell in my ſpirit, and was giving up all for loſt. But as I was walking up and down in the houſe, as a man in a moſt woeful ſtate, that word of God took hold of my heart, 'Ye are juſtified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Chriſt Jeſus,

Rom. iii. 24. But, oh! what a turn it made upon me!

258. Now was I as one awaked out of ſome troubleſome ſleep and dream; and liſtening to this heavenly ſentence, I was as if I had heard it thus ſpoken to me: "Sinner, thou thinkeſt that becauſe of thy ſins and infirmities, I cannot ſave thy ſoul; but, behold! my Son is by me; and upon him I look, and not on thee, and deal with thee according as I am pleaſed with him." At this I was greatly enlightened in my mind, and made to underſtand, that if God would juſtify a ſinner at any time, it was but his looking upon Chriſt and imputing of his benefits to us, and the work was forthwith done.

259. And as I was thus in a muſe, that ſcripture alſo came with great power upon my ſpirit, 'Not by works of righteouſneſs that we have done, but according to his mercy he hath ſaved us, &c. 2 *Tim.* i. 9. *Tit.* iii. 5. Now was I got on high: I ſaw myſelf within the arms of grace and mercy; and though I was before afraid to think of a dying hour, yet now I cried, "Let me die." Now death was lovely and beautiful in my ſight: for I ſaw "we ſhall never live indeed till we be gone to the other world." O! methought this life is but a ſlumber, in compariſon of that above. At this time alſo I ſaw more in theſe words, 'Heirs of God,' *Rom.* viii. 17. than ever I ſhall be able to expreſs while I live in this world. 'Heirs of God!' God himſelf is the portion of the ſaints. This I ſaw, and wondered at; but cannot tell you what I ſaw.

260. Again, as I was at another time very ill and weak, all that time alſo the tempter did beſet me ſtrongly, (for I find he is much for aſſaulting the ſoul when it begins to approach towards the

grave, then is his opportunity), labouring to hide from me my former experience of God's goodneſs: alſo ſetting before me the terrors of death, and the judgment of God, inſomuch that at this time, through my fear of miſcarrying for ever, ſhould I now die, I was as one dead before death came, and was as if I had felt myſelf already deſcending into the pit: methought, I ſaid, there was no way, but to hell I muſt. But, behold! juſt as I was in the midſt of theſe fears, theſe words of the angels, carrying Lazarus into Abraham's boſom, darted in upon me, as who ſhould ſay, "So it ſhall be with thee, when thou doſt leave this world." This did ſweetly revive my ſpirits, and help me to hope in God; which when I had with comfort muſed on a while, that word fell with great weight upon my mind, 'O death where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory? 1 *Cor.* xv. 55. At this I became both well in body and mind at once; for my ſickneſs did preſently vaniſh, and I walked comfortably in my work for God again.

261. At another time, though juſt before I was pretty well and ſavoury in my ſpirit, yet ſuddenly there fell upon me a great cloud of darkneſs, which did ſo hide from me the things of God and Chriſt, that I was as if I had never ſeen or known them in my life: I was alſo ſo over-run in my ſoul with a ſenſeleſs heartleſs frame of ſpirit, that I could not feel my ſoul to move or ſtir after grace and life by Chriſt; I was as if my loins were broken, or as if my hands and feet had been tied or bound with chains. At this time alſo I felt ſome weakneſs to ſeize upon my outward man, which made ſtill the other affliction the more heavy and uncomfortable to me.

262. After I had been in this condition some three or four days, as I was sitting by the fire, I suddenly felt this word to sound in my heart, 'I must go to Jesus': at this my former darkness and Atheism fled away, and the blessed things of heaven were set within my view. While I was on this sudden thus overtaken with surprise, Wife, said I, is there ever such a scripture, 'I must to go Jesus?' She said, she could not tell; therefore I stood musing still, to see if I could remember such a place: I had not sat above two or three minutes, but that came bolting in upon me, 'And to an innumerable company of angels;' and withal, Hebrews xii. about the Mount Sion was set before mine eyes, *Heb.* xii. 22, 23, 24.

263. Then with joy I told my wife, "O now I know, I know!" but that night was a good night to me: I never had but few better: I longed for the company of some of God's people, that I might have imparted unto them what God had shewed me. Christ was a precious Christ to my soul that night: I could scarce lie in my bed for joy, and peace, and triumph, through Christ. This great glory did not continue upon me until morning; yet the 12th of the author to the Hebrews, *Heb.* xii. 22, 23. was a blessed scripture to me for many days together after this.

264. The words are these, 'Ye are come to Mount Sion, to the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Testament, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.' Thro' this blessed

ſentence, the Lord led me over and over, firſt to this word, and then to that, and ſhewed me wonderful glory in every one of them. Theſe words alſo have oft, ſince this time, been great refreſhment to my ſpirit. Bleſſed be God for having mercy on me.

A brief Account of the Author's Call to the Work of the Miniſtry.

265. AND now I am ſpeaking my experience, I will in this place thruſt in a word or two concerning my preaching the word, and of God's dealing with me in that particular alſo: for after I had been about five or ſix years awakened, and helped myſelf to ſee both the want and worth of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, and alſo enabled to ventnre my ſoul upon him, ſome of the moſt able among the ſaints with us, I ſay, the moſt able for judgment and holineſs of life, as they conceived, did perceive that God had counted me worthy to underſtand ſomething of his will in his holy and bleſſed word, and had given me utterance, in ſome meaſure, to expreſs what I ſaw to others for edification; therefore they deſired me, and that with much earneſtneſs, that I would be willing at ſome times to take in hand, in one of the meetings, to ſpeak a word of exhortation unto them.

266. The which, though at the firſt it did daſh and abaſh my ſpirit, yet being ſtill by them deſired and intreated, I conſented to their requeſt, and did twice, at two ſeveral aſſemblies, but in private, tho' with much weakneſs and infirmity, diſcover my gift amongſt them: at which they not only ſeemed to be, but did ſolemnly proteſt, as in the ſight of the great God, they were both

affected and comforted; and gave thanks to the Father of Mercies for the grace beſtowed on me.

267. After this, ſometimes, when ſome of them did go into the country to teach, they would alſo that I ſhould go with them; where though as yet I did not, nor durſt not make uſe of my gift in an open way, yet more privately ſtill, as I came amongſt the good people in thoſe places, I did ſometimes ſpeak a word of admonition unto them alſo; the which they, as the other received, with rejoicing at the mercy of God to me ward, profeſſing their ſouls were edified thereby.

268. Wherefore, to be brief, at laſt, being ſtill deſired by the church, after ſome ſolemn prayer to the Lord, with faſting, I was more particularly called forth, and appointed to a more ordinary and public preaching the word, not only to and amongſt them that believe, but alſo to offer the goſpel to thoſe who had not yet received the faith thereof. About which time I did evidently find in my mind a ſecret pricking forward thereto; though I bleſs God, not for deſire of vain glory; for at that time I was moſt ſorely afflicted with the fiery darts of the devil, concerning my eternal ſtate.

269. But yet could not be content, unleſs I was found in the exerciſe of my gift; unto which alſo I was greatly animated, not only by the continual deſires of the godly, but alſo by that ſaying of Paul to the Corinthians, 'I beſeech you, brethren, ye know the houſehold of Stephanus, that it is the firſt fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themſelves to the miniſtry of the ſaints, that ye ſubmit yourſelves unto ſuch, and to every one that helpeth with us and laboureth,' 1 *Cor.* xvi. 15, 16.

270. By this text I was made to ſee, that the Holy Ghoſt never intended that men who have

gifts and abilities ſhould bury them in the earth, but rather did command and ſtir up ſuch to the exerciſe of their gift; and alſo did commend thoſe that were apt and ready ſo to do, 'They have addicted themſelves to the miniſtry of the ſaints.' This ſcripture in theſe days, did continually run in my mind, to encourage me, and ſtrengthen me in this my work for God. I have alſo been encouraged from ſeveral other ſcriptures, and examples of the godly, as ſpecified in the word and other ancient hiſtories, *Acts* v. iii. 4. and xviii. 24, 25. *Pet.* iv. 1. *Rom.* xii. Fox's Acts and Mon.

271. Wherefore, though of myſelf of all the ſaints the moſt unworthy, yet I, but with great fear and trembling at the ſight of my own weakneſs, did ſet upon the work; and did according to my gift, and the proportion of my faith, preach that bleſſed goſpel that God has ſhewed me by the holy word of truth. Which when the country underſtood, they came in to hear the word by hundreds, and that from all parts; though upon divers and ſundry accounts.

272. And I thank God he gave unto me ſome meaſure of bowels and pity for their ſouls; which alſo did put me forward to labour, with great diligence and earneſtneſs, to find out ſuch a word as might, if God would bleſs it, lay hold of and awaken the conſcience. In which alſo the good Lord had reſpect to the deſire of his ſervant; for I had not preached long, before ſome began to be touched and be greatly afflicted in their minds, at the apprehenſion of the greatneſs of their ſin, and of their need of Jeſus Chriſt.

273. But I firſt could not believe that God ſhould ſpeak by me to the heart of any man, ſtill counting myſelf unworthy. Yet thoſe who thus were touched would love me, and have a parti-

cular reſpect for me; and though I did put it from me, that they ſhould be awakened by me, ſtill they would confeſs it, and affirm it before the ſaints of God: they would alſo bleſs God for me, unworthy wretch that I am! and count me God's inſtrument that ſhewed to them the way of ſalvation.

274. Wherefore ſeeing them in both their words and deeds to be ſo conſtant, and alſo in their hearts ſo earneſtly preſſing after the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, rejoicing that ever God did ſend me where they were; then I began to conclude it might be ſo, that God hath owned in his work ſuch a fooliſh one as I; and then came that word of God to my heart, with much ſweet refreſhment, 'The bleſſing of them that were ready to periſh is come upon me; yea, I cauſed the widow's heart to ſing for joy,' *Job* xxix. 13.

275. At this therefore I rejoiced: yea, the tears of thoſe whom God did awaken by my preaching, would be both ſolace and encouragement to me; for I thought on theſe ſayings 'Who is he that maketh me glad, but the ſame that is made ſorry by me?' 2 *Cor.* xxii. and again, 'Though I be not an apoſtle to others, yet doubtleſs I am unto you: for the ſeal of my apoſtleſhip are ye in the Lord,' 1 *Cor.* vi. 2. Theſe things therefore were as another argument unto me, that God had called me to, and ſtood by me on this work.

276. In my preaching of the word, I took ſpecial notice of this one thing, namely, that the Lord did lead me to begin where his word begins with ſinners; that is, to condemn all fleſh, and to open and alledge that the curſe of God by the law doth belong to, and lay hold on all men as they come into the world, becauſe of ſin. Now this part of my work I fulfilled with great ſenſe;

for the terrors of the law, and guilt for my tranſgreſſions, lay heavy on my conſcience. I preached what I felt, what I ſmartingly did feel, even that under which my poor ſoul did groan and tremble to aſtoniſhment.

277. Indeed I have been as one ſent to them from the dead. I went myſelf in chains, to preach to them in chains; and carried that fire in my own conſcience that I perſuaded them to beware of. I can truly ſay, and that without diſſembling, that when I have been to preach, I have gone full of guilt and terror, even to the pulpit door, and there it hath been taken off, and I have been at liberty in my mind until I have done my work; and then immediately, even before I could get down the pulpit ſtairs, I have been as bad as I was before; yet God carried me on: but ſurely with a ſtrong hand; for neither guilt nor hell could take me off my work.

278. Thus I went for the ſpace of two years, crying out againſt mens ſins, and their fearful ſtate becauſe of them. After which the Lord came in upon my own ſoul, with ſome ſure peace and comfort through Chriſt; for he did give me many ſweet diſcoveries of his bleſſed grace through him. Wherefore now I altered in my preaching, (for ſtill I preached what I ſaw and felt); now therefore I did much labour to hold forth Jeſus Chriſt in all offices, relations, and benefits unto the world, and did ſtrive alſo to diſcover, to condemn, and remove thoſe falſe ſupports and props on which the world doth both lean, and by them fall and periſh. On theſe things alſo I ſtaid as long as on the other.

279. After this, God led me into ſomething of the myſtery of the union of Chriſt: wherefore that I diſcovered, and ſhewed to them alſo. And when I had travelled through theſe three

chief points of the word of God, about the ſpace of five years or more, I was caught in my preſent practice, and caſt into priſon; where I have lain above as long again to confirm the truth by way of ſuffering, as I was before in teſtifying of it according to the ſcriptures, in a way of preaching.

280. When I have been preaching, I thank God, my heart hath often all the time of this and the other exerciſe, with great earneſtneſs cried to God that he would make the word effectual to the ſalvation of the ſoul; ſtill being grieved leſt the enemy ſhould take the word away from the conſcience, and ſo it ſhould become unfruitful: Wherefore I did labour ſo to ſpeak the word, as that thereby, if it were poſſible, the ſin and perſon guilty might be particulariſed by it.

281. Alſo when I have done the exerciſe, it hath gone to my heart to think the word ſhould now fall as rain on ſtony places: ſtill wiſhing from my heart, O that they who have heard me ſpeak this day, did but ſee as I do, what ſin, death, hell, and the curſe of God is: and alſo what the grace, and love, and mercy of God is through Chriſt, to men in ſuch a caſe as they are, who are yet eſtranged from him. And indeed I did often ſay in my heart before the Lord, "That if to be hanged up preſently before their eyes, would be as means to awaken them and confirm them in the truth, I gladly ſhould be contented."

282. For I have been in my preaching, eſpecially when I have been engaged in the doctrine of life by Chriſt without works as if an angel of God had ſtood by at my back to encourage me: Oh! it hath been with ſuch power and heavenly evidence upon my own ſoul, while I have been labouring to unfold it, to demonſtrate it, and to faſten it upon the conſciences of others,

that I could not be contented with saying, 'I believe and am sure;' methought I was more than sure, (if it be lawful to express myself), that those things which then I asserted were true.

283. When I went first to preach the word abroad, the doctors and priests of the country did open wide against me: but I was persuaded of this, not to render railing for railing, but to see how many of their carnal professors I could convince of their miserable state by the law, and of the want and worth of Christ; for, thought I, "This shall answer for me in time to come, when they shall be for my hire before their face," *Gen.* xxx. 23.

284. I never cared to meddle with things that were controverted, and in dispute among the saints, and especially things of the lowest nature; yet it pleased me much to contend with great earnestness for the word of faith, and the remission of sins by the death and sufferings of Jesus: but, I say, as to other things, I should but let them alone, because I saw they engendered strife, and because that they, neither in doing, nor in leaving undone, did commend us to God to be his. Besides, I saw my work before me did run into another channel, even to carry an awakening word; to that therefore I did stick and adhere.

285. I never endeavoured to, nor durst make use of other men's lines, *Rom.* xv. 18. though I condemn not all that do; for I verily thought, and found by experience, that what was taught me by the word and spirit of Christ, could be spoken, maintained and stood to, by the soundest and best established conscience; and though I will not now speak all that I know in this matter, yet my experience hath more interest in that text of scripture, *Gal.* i. 11, 12. than many among men are aware.

286. If any of those who were awakened by my ministry, did after that fall back, (as sometimes too many did), I can truly say, their loss hath been more to me, than if my own child begotten of my own body, had been going to its grave. I think verily I may speak it without any offence to the Lord, nothing hath gone so near me as that, unless it was the fear of the loss of the salvation of my own soul. I have counted as if I had goodly buildings and lordships in those places where my children were born. My heart hath been so wrapped up in the glory of this excellent work, that I counted myself more blessed and honoured of God by this, than if he had made me emperor of the Christian world, or the lord of all the glory of the earth without it! Oh, these words! 'He that converteth a sinner from the error of his way, doth save a soul from death,' *James* v. 20. 'The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise,' *Prov.* xi. 30. 'They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever,' *Dan.* xii. 3. 'For what is our hope, our joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? for ye are our glory and joy,' 1 *Thes.* ii. 19, 20. These, I say, with many others of a like nature, have been great refreshments to me.

287. I have observed, that where I have had a work to do for God, I have had first as it were the going of God upon my spirit, to desire I might preach there. I have also observed, that such and such souls in particular have been strongly set upon my heart, and I stirred up to wish for their salvation; and that these very souls have, after this, been given in as the fruit of my ministry. I have observed, that a word cast in by the by hath done

more excution in a ſermon than all that was ſpoken beſides. Sometimes alſo, when I have thought I did no good, then I did the moſt of all; and at other times, when I thought I ſhould catch them, I have fiſhed for nothing.

288. I have alſo obſerved, that where there has been a work to do upon ſinners, there the devil hath begun to roar in the hearts and by the mouths of his ſervants; yea, oftentimes, when the wicked world hath raged moſt, there hath been ſouls awakened by the word, I could inſtance particulars, but I forbear.

289. My great deſire, in my fulfilling my miniſtry, was to get into the darkeſt places of the country, even amongſt thoſe people that were fartheſt off of profeſſors: yet not becauſe I could not endure the light, (for I feared not to ſhew my goſpel to any), but becauſe I found my ſpirit leaned moſt after awakening and converting work, and the word that I carried did lean itſelf moſt that way alſo: "Yea, ſo have I ſtrived to preach the goſpel, not where Chriſt was named, leſt I ſhould build upon another man's foundation," *Rom.* xv. 20.

290. In my preaching I have really been in pain, and have, as it were, travailed to bring forth children to God; neither could I be ſatisfied unleſs ſome fruit did appear in my work. If I were fruitleſs it mattered not who commended me; but if I were fruitful I cared not who did condemn. I have thought of that, 'Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows in the hand of a mighty man, ſo are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath filled his quiver full of them; they ſhall not be aſhamed, but they

ſhall ſpeak with the enemies in the gate,' *Pſalm* cxxvii. 3, 4, 5.

291. It pleaſed me nothing to ſee people drink in opinions, if they ſeemed ignorant of Jeſus Chriſt, and the worth of their own ſalvation: ſound conviction for ſin, eſpecially for unbelief, and an heart ſet on fire to be ſaved by Chriſt, with ſtrong breathings after a truly ſanctified ſoul; that it was that delighted me; thoſe were the ſouls I counted bleſſed.

292. But in this work, as in all other, I had my temptation attending me; and that of diverſe kinds: as ſometimes I ſhould be aſſaulted with great diſcouragement therein; fearing that I ſhould not be able to ſpeak a word at all to edification; nay, that I ſhould not be able to ſpeak ſenſe unto the people; at which times I ſhould have ſuch a ſtrange faintneſs and ſtrengthleſsneſs ſeize upon my body, that my legs have ſcarce been able to carry me to the place of exerciſe.

293. Sometimes again, when I have been preaching, I have been violently aſſaulted with thoughts of blaſphemy, and ſtrongly tempted to ſpeak the words with my mouth before the congregation. I have alſo, at ſome times, even when I have begun to ſpeak the word with much clearneſs, evidence and liberty of ſpeech, yet been, before the ending of that opportunity, ſo blinded, and ſo eſtranged from the things I have been ſpeaking, and have been alſo ſo ſtraitned in my ſpeech, as to utterance before the people, that I have been as if I had not known or remembered what I have been about; or as if my head had been in a bag all the time of my exerciſe.

294. Again, when at ſometimes I have been about to preach upon a ſmart and ſearching portion of the word, I have found the tempter ſuggeſt, "What, will you preach this! This con-

demns yourſelf; of this your own ſoul is guilty: wherefore preach not of it at all; or if you do, yet ſo mince it as to make way for your own eſcape; leſt, inſtead of awakening others, you lay that guilt upon your own ſoul as you will never get from under."

295. But, I thank the Lord, I have been kept from conſenting to theſe ſo horrid ſuggeſtions; and have rather, as Samſon, bowed myſelf with all my might, to condemn ſin and tranſgreſſion wherever I found it: yea, though therein I did bring guilt upon my own conſcience: 'Let me die,' thought I, 'with the Philiſtines,' *Judg.* xvi. 29, 30. rather than deal corruptly with the bleſſed word of God: 'Thou that teacheſt another, teacheſt not thou thyſelf?' It is far better that thou judge thyſelf, even by preaching plainly to others, than that thou, to ſave thyſelf, impriſon the truth in unrighteouſneſs. Bleſſed be God for his help alſo in this.

296. I have alſo, while found in this bleſſed work of Chriſt, been often tempted to pride and lifting up of heart; and though I dare not ſay I have not been affected with this, yet truly the Lord, of his precious mercy, hath ſo carried it towards me, that for the moſt part I have had but ſmall joy to give way to ſuch a thing: for it hath been my every day's portion, to be let into the evils of my own heart, and ſtill made to ſee ſuch a multitude of corruptions and infirmities therein, that it hath cauſed hanging down of the head, under all my gifts and attainments. I have felt this thorn in the fleſh, (2 *Cor.* xii. 8, 9.) the very mercy of God to me.

297. I have had alſo together with this, ſome notable place or other of the word preſented before me, which word hath contained in it ſome

ſharp and piercing ſentence concerning the periſhing of the ſoul, notwithſtanding gifts and parts; as for inſtance, that hath been of great uſe to me, 'Though I ſpeak with the tongue of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as ſounding braſs, and a tinkling cymbal,' 1 *Cor.* xiii. 1, 2.

298. A tinkling cymbal is an inſtrument of muſic, with which a ſkilful player can make ſuch melodious and heart-inflaming muſic, that all who hear him play, can ſcarely hold from dancing; and yet behold the cymbal hath not life, neither comes the muſic from it, but becauſe of the art of him that plays therewith; ſo then the inſtrument at laſt may come to nought and periſh, though in times paſt ſuch muſic hath been made upon it.

299. Juſt thus I ſaw it was, and will be with them that have gifts, but want ſaving grace: they are in the hand of Chriſt, as the cymbal in the hand of David; and as David could with the cymbal make that mirth in the ſervice of God, as to elevate the hearts of the worſhippers; ſo Chriſt can uſe theſe gifted men, as with them to affect the ſouls of his people in his church; yet when he hath done all, hang them by as lifeleſs, though ſounding cymbals.

300. This conſideration therefore, together with ſome others, were, for the moſt part, as a maul on the head of pride, and deſire of vain glory. What, thought I, ſhall I be proud becauſe I am a ſounding braſs? Is it ſo much to be a fiddle? Hath not the leaſt creature that hath life more of God in it than theſe! Beſides, I knew it was love ſhould never die, but theſe muſt ceaſe and vaniſh. So I concluded, a little grace, a little love, a little of the true fear of God, is better than all gifts; yea, and I am fully con-

vinced of it, that it is poſſible for ſouls that can ſcarce give a man an anſwer, but with great confuſion as to method; I ſay it is poſſible for them to have a thouſand times more grace, and ſo to be more in the love and favour of the Lord, than ſome, who, by virtue of the gift of knowledge, can deliver themſelves like angels.

301. Thus therefore I came to perceive, that tho' gifts in themſelves were good to the thing for which they are deſigned, to wit, the edification of others; yet empty, and without power to ſave the ſoul of him that hath them, if they be alone: neither are they, as ſo, any ſign of a man's ſtate to be happy, being only a diſpenſation of God to ſome, of whoſe improvement, or non-improvement, they muſt, when a little time more is over, give an account to him that is ready to judge the quick and dead.

302. This ſhewed me too, that gifts being alone were dangerous; not in themſelves, but becauſe of thoſe evils that attend them that have them; to wit, pride, deſire of vain glory, ſelf-conceit, &c. all which were eaſily blown up at the applauſe and commendation of every unadviſed Chriſtian, to the endangering of a poor creature to fall into the condemnation of the devil.

303. I ſaw therefore that he that hath gifts, had need be let into a ſight of the nature of them; to wit, that they come ſhort of making of him to be in a truly ſaved condition, leſt he reſt in them, and ſo fall ſhort of the grace of God.

304. He hath alſo cauſe to walk humbly with God, and be little in his own eyes, and to remember withal, that his gifts are not his own, but the church's; and that by them he is made a ſervant to the church; and he muſt give at laſt an account of his ſtewardſhip unto the Lord

Jeſus; and to give a good account, will be a bleſſed thing.

305. Let all men therefore prize a little with the fear of the Lord. Gifts indeed are deſirable; but yet great grace and ſmall gifts are better than great gifts and no grace. It doth not ſay, The Lord gives gifts and glory; but, The Lord gives grace and glory: and bleſſed is ſuch an one to whom the Lord gives grace, true grace, for that is a certain fore-runner of glory.

306. But when Satan perceived that his thus tempting and aſſaulting of me would not anſwer his deſign, to overthrow the miniſtry, and make it ineffectual, as to the ends thereof; then he tried another way; which was, to ſtir up the minds of the ignorant and malicious, to load me with ſlanders and reproaches. Now therefore I may ſay, that what the devil could deviſe, and his inſtruments invent, was whirled up and down the country againſt me thinking, as I ſaid, that by that means they ſhould make my miniſtry to be abandoned.

307. It began therefore to be rumoured up and down among the people, that I was a witch, a jeſuit, a highwayman, and the like.

308. To all which, I ſhall only ſay, God knows that I am innocent. But as for mine accuſers; let them provide themſelves to meet me before the tribunal of the Son of God, there to anſwer for all theſe things, with all the reſt of their iniquities, unleſs God ſhall give them repentance for them; for the which I pray with all my heart.

309. But that which was reported with the boldeſt confidence, was, that I had my miſſes, my whores, my baſtards, yea, two wives at once, and the like. Now theſe ſlanders, with the other, I glory in, becauſe but ſlanders,

fooliſh or knaviſh lies, and falſehoods caſt upon me by the devil and his ſeed. And ſhould I not be dealt with thus wickedly by the world, I ſhould want one ſign of a ſaint, and child of God: 'Bleſſed are ye,' ſaith the Lord Jeſus, 'when men ſhall revile you, and perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all manner of evil of you falſely for my ſake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven, for ſo perſecuted they the prophets which were before you,' *Matt.* v. 10, 11.

310. Theſe things therefore, upon mine own account, trouble me not: no, though they were twenty times more than they are. I have a good conſcience, and whereas they ſpeak evil of me, as an evil doer, they ſhall be aſhamed that falſely accuſe my good converſation in Chriſt.

311. So then, what ſhall I ſay to thoſe that have thus beſpattered me? Shall I threaten them? ſhall I chide them? ſhall I flatter them? ſhall I intreat them to hold their tongues? No, not I: were it not for that theſe things make them ripe for damnation that are the authors and abettors, I would ſay unto them, 'Report it,' becauſe it will increaſe my glory.

312. Therefore I bind theſe lies and ſlanders to meas an ornament; it belongs to my Chriſtian profeſſion to be vilified, ſlandered, reproached and reviled; and ſince all this is nothing elſe, as my God and my conſcience do bear me witneſs, I rejoice in the reproaches for Chriſt's ſake.

313. I alſo call all thoſe fools, or knaves, that have thus made it any thing of their buſineſs, to affirm any of theſe things aforenamed of me, namely, that I have been naught with other women, or the like, when they have uſed to the utmoſt of their endeavours, and made the fulleſt enquiry that they can to prove againſt me truly,

that there is any woman in heaven, or in earth, or hell, that can ſay, I have, at any time, in any place, by day or night, ſo much as attempted to be naught with them. And ſpeak I thus, to beg my enemies into a good eſteem of me? No, not I: I will in this beg relief of no man: believe or miſbelieve me in this, all is a caſe to me.

314. My foes have miſſed their mark in this their ſhooting at me. I am not the man. I wiſh that they themſelves be guiltleſs. If all the fornicators and adulterers in England were hanged up by the neck till they be dead, John Bunyan, the object of their envy, would be ſtill alive and well. I know not whether there be ſuch a thing as a woman breathing under the cops of heaven, but by their apparel, their children, or by common fame, except my wife.

315. And in this I admire the wiſdom of God, that he made me ſhy of a woman from my firſt converſion until now. Thoſe know, and can alſo bear me witneſs, with whom I have been moſt intimately concerned, that it is a rare thing to ſee me carry it pleaſant towards a woman: the common ſalutation of women I abhor, it is odious to me in whomſoever I ſee it. Their company alone I cannot away with. I ſeldom ſo much as touch a woman's hand: for I think theſe things are not ſo becoming me. When I have ſeen good men ſalute thoſe women that they have viſited, or that have viſited them, I have at times made my objections againſt it; and when they have anſwered that it was but a piece of civility, I have told them it is not a comely ſight. Some indeed have urged the holy kiſs. But then I have aſked, why they made baulks? Why they did ſalute the moſt handſome, and let the ill-favoured go? Thus how laudable ſoever ſuch things have been in the eyes of others, they have been unſeemly in my ſight.

316. And now for a wind up in this matter, I called not only men, but angels, to prove me guilty of having carnally to do with any woman ſave my wife. Nor am I afraid to do it a ſecond time, knowing that I cannot offend the Lord in ſuch a caſe, to call God for a record upon my ſoul, that in theſe things I am innocent. Not that I have been thus kept becauſe of any goodneſs in me more than any other, but God has been merciful to me, and has kept me: whom I pray that he will keep me ſtill, not only from this, but from every evil way and work, and preſerve me to his heavenly kingdom. Amen.

317. Now, as Satan endeavoured, by reproaches and ſlanders, to make me vile among my countrymen, that, if poſſible, my preaching might be made of none effect; ſo there was added hereto a long and tedious impriſonment, that hereby I might be frightned from my ſervice for Chriſt, and the world terrified and made afraid to hear me preach. Of which I ſhall, in the next place, give you a brief account.

A brief Account of the Author's Impriſonment.

318. HAVING made profeſſion of the glorious goſpel of Chriſt a long time, and preached the ſame about five years, I was apprehended at a meeting of good people in the country, among whom, had they let me alone, I ſhould have preached that day; but they took me away from amongſt them, and had me before a juſtice; who, after I had offered ſecurity for my appearing the next ſeſſions, yet committed me, becauſe my ſureties would not conſent to be bound, that I ſhould preach no more to the people.

319. At the ſeſſions after, I was indicted for an upholder and maintainer of unlawful aſſemblies and conventicles, and for not conforming to the national worſhip of the church of England; and after ſome conference there with the juſtices, they taking my

plain dealing with them for a confeſſion, as they termed it, "of the indictment, did ſentence me to a perpetual baniſhment, becauſe I refuſed to conform." So being again delivered up to the jaylor's hand, I was had home to priſon; and there have lain now complete twelve years, waiting to ſee what God would ſuffer theſe men to do with me.

320. In which condition I have continued with much content, through grace; but have met with many turnings and goings upon my heart, both from the Lord, Satan, and my own corruptions: by all which, glory be to Jeſus Chriſt, I have alſo received, among many things, much conviction, inſtruction, and underſtanding; of which at large I ſhall not here diſcourſe; only give you a hint or two, a word that may ſtir up the goldly to bleſs God, and to pray for me; and alſo to take encouragement, ſhould the caſe be their own, 'not to fear what man can do unto them."

321. I never had in all my life ſo great an inlet into the word of God as now. Thoſe ſcriptures that I ſaw nothing in before, are made in this place and ſtate to ſhine upon me. Jeſus Chriſt alſo was never more real and apparent than now: here I have ſeen and felt him indeed. O that word! 'We have not preached unto you cunningly deviſed fables,' 1 *Pet.* i. 16. and that, 'God raiſed Chriſt from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God,' 1 *Pet.* i. 2. were bleſſed words unto me in this my impriſoned condition.

322. Theſe three or four ſcriptures alſo have been great refreſhments in this condition to me. *John* xiv. 1, 2, 3, 4. *John* xvi. 33. *Col.* iii. 3, 4. *Heb.* xii. 22, 23, 24. So that ſometime, when I have been in the favour of them, I have been able 'to laugh at deſtruction, and to fear neither the horſe nor his rider.' I have had ſweet ſights of the forgiveneſs of my ſins in this place, and of my being with Jeſus in another world. 'O the Mount Sion, the heavenly Jeruſalem, the innumerable company of angels, and God the judge of all, and the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, and Jeſus, have been ſweet unto me in this place! I have ſeen that here, that I am perſuaded I ſhall never, while in this world, be able to expreſs. I have ſeen a truth in this ſcripture. 'Whom having not ſeen, ye love; in

whom, tho' now ye ſee him not yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory,' 1 Pet. i. 8.

323. I never knew what it was for God to ſtand by me at all turns; and at every offer of Satan to afflict me, &c. as I have found him ſince I came in hither; for look how fears have preſented themſelves, ſo have ſupports and encouragements: yea, when I have ſtarted, even as it were at nothing elſe but my ſhadow: yet God, as being very tender of me, hath not ſuffered me to be moleſted, but would, with one ſcripture or another, ſtrengthen me againſt all, inſomuch that I have often ſaid, 'Were it lawful, I could pray for greater trouble, for the greater comforts ſake,' Eccleſ. vii. 14. 2. Cor. i. 5,

324. Before I came to priſon, I ſaw what was a-coming; and had eſpecially two conſiderations warm upon my heart. The firſt was, how to be able to encounter death, ſhould that be here my portion. For the firſt of theſe, that ſcripture, Col. i. 11. was great information to me, namely, to pray to God 'to be ſtrengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-ſuffering with joyfulneſs.' I could ſeldom go to prayer before I was impriſoned, but for not ſo little as a year together, this ſentence, or ſweet petition, would, as it were, thruſt itſelf into my mind, and perſuade me, that if ever I would go through long-ſuffering, I muſt have patience, eſpecially if I would endure it joyfully.

325. As to the ſeco d conſider-tion, that ſaying (2 Cor. i. 9.) was of great great uſe to me, 'But we had the ſentence of death in ourſelves, that we might not truſt in ourſelves, but in God, that raiſed the dead.' By this ſcripture I was made to ſee, that if ever I would ſuffer rightly, I muſt firſt paſs a ſentence of death upon every thing that can properly be called a thing of this life; even to reckon myſelf, my wife, my children, my health, my enjoyments, and all as dead to me, and myſelf as dead to them.

326. The ſecond was, to live upon God that is inviſible; as Paul ſaith in another place, the way not to faint, is 'to look, not at the things that are ſeen, but at the things that are not ſeen: For the

things that are ſeen are temporal; but the things that are not ſeen are eternal.' And thus I reaſoned with myſelf: If I provide only for a priſon, then the whip comes at unawares; and ſo doth alſo the pillory. Again, if I only provide for theſe, then I am not fit for baniſhment. Further, if I conclude that baniſhment is the worſt, then if death come I am ſurpriſed. So that I ſee the beſt way to go through ſufferings, is to truſt in God through Chriſt, as touching the world to come: and, as touching this world, to count the grave my houſe, to make my bed in darkneſs, and to ſay to corruption, Thou art my father; and to the worm, Thou art my mother and ſiſter: that is, to familiariſe theſe things to me.

327. But notwitſtanding theſe helps, I found myſelf a man encompaſſed with infirmities. The parting with my wife and poor children hath often been to me, in this place, as the pulling the fleſh from my bones; and that not only becauſe I am ſomewhat too too fond of theſe great mercies, but alſo becauſe I ſhould have often brought to my mind the many hardſhips, miſeries, and wants, that my poor family was like to meet with; eſpecially my poor blind child, who lay nearer my heart than all I had beſide. O! the thoughts of the hardſhips I thought my blind one might go under, would break my heart to pieces.

328. Poor child, thought I, what ſorrow art thou like to have for thy portion in this world! Thou muſt be beaten, muſt beg, ſuffer hunger, cold, nakedneſs, and a thouſand calamities, though I cannot now endure the wind ſhould blow upon thee. But yet recalling myſelf, thought I, I muſt venture you all with God, though it goeth to the quick to leave you. O! I ſaw in this condition I was as a man who was pulling down his houſe upon the head of his wife and children; yet, thought I, I muſt do it, I muſt do it. And now I thought on theſe 'two milk kine that were to carry the ark of God into another country, to leave their calves behind them,' 1 Sam. vi. 10. 11. 12,

329. But that which helped me in this temptation, was divers conſiderations, of which three in ſpecial here I will name. The firſt was, the conſideration

of these two scriptures, 'Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in me:' And again, 'the Lord said, Verily it shall go well with thy remnant; verily, I will cause the enemy to intreat thee well in the time of evil, &c.' *Jer.* xlix. 11. and xv. 11.

330. I had also this consideration, that if I should now venture all for God, I engaged God to take care of my concernments: but if I forsook Him and his ways, for fear of any trouble that should come to me or mine, then I should not only falsify my profession, but should count also that my concernments were not so sure, if left at God's feet, whilst I stood to and for his name, as they would be, if they were under my own care, though with the denial of the way of God. This was a smarting consideration, and as spurs to my flesh. That scripture also greatly helped it to fasten the more upon me, where Christ prays against Judas, that God would disappoint him in his selfish thoughts, which moved him to sell his master. Pray read it soberly, *Psalm* cix. 6, 7, 8, &c.

331. I had also another consideration, and that was, the dread of the torments of hell, which I was sure they must partake of that, for fear of the cross, do shrink from their profession of Christ, his words and laws, before the sons of men. I thought also of the glory that he had prepared for those that in faith and love, and patience, stood to his ways before them. These things, I say, have helped me, when the thoughts of the misery that both myself and mine might, for the sake of my profession, be exposed to, hath lain pinching on my mind.

332. When I have indeed conceived, that I might be banished for my profession, then I have thought of that scripture, 'They were stoned, they were 'sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the 'sword; they wandered about in sheep's skins and 'goat skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, 'of whom the world was not worthy:' for all they thought they were too bad to dwell, and abide amongst them. I have also thought of that saying, 'The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, that bonds 'and afflictions abide me.' I have verily thought

that my ſoul and it have ſometimes reaſoned about the ſore and ſad eſtate of a baniſhed and exiled condition, how they are expoſed to hunger, to cold, to perils, to nakedneſs, to enemies, and a thouſand calamities; and at laſt, it may be to die in a ditch like a poor forlorn and deſolate ſheep. But I thank God, hitherto I have not been moved by theſe moſt delicate reaſonings, but have rather by them more approved my heart to God.

333. I will tell you a pretty buſineſs: I was once, above all the reſt, in a very ſad and low condition for many weeks; at which time alſo I being but a young priſoner, and not acquainted with the laws, had this laid much upon my ſpirit, 'That my im-'priſonment might end at the gallows for ought that 'I could tell.' Now therefore Satan laid hard at me, to beat me out of heart, by ſuggeſting thus unto me: "But how if, when you come indeed to die, you ſhould be in this condition; that is, as not to favour the things of God, nor to have any evidence upon your ſoul for a better ſtate hereafter?" for indeed at that time all the things of God were hid from my ſoul.

334. Wherefore, when I at firſt began to think of this, it was a great trouble to me: for I thought with myſelf, that in the condition I now was in, I was not fit to die; neither indeed did think I could, if I ſhould be called to it: beſides, I thought with myſelf, if I ſhould make a ſcrambling ſhift to clamber up the ladder, yet I ſhould either with quaking, or other ſymptoms of fainting, give occaſion to the enemy to reproach the way of God and his people, for their timorouſneſs. This therefore lay with great trouble upon me; for methought, I was aſhamed to die with a pale face, and tottering knees, in ſuch a cauſe as this.

335. Wherefore I prayed to God, that he would comfort me, and give me ſtrength to do and ſuffer what he would call me to. Yet no comfort appeared, but all continued hid. I was alſo at this time ſo really poſſeſſed with the thoughts of death, that oft I was as if I was on a ladder with a rope about my neck. Only this was ſome encouragement to me, I thought I might now have an opportunity to ſpeak my laſt words unto a multitude which I thought

would come to ſee me die; and thought I, if it muſt be ſo, if God will but convert one ſoul by my laſt words, I ſhall not count my life thrown away, nor loſt.

336. But yet all the things of God were kept out of my ſight, and ſtill the tempter followed me with, "But whither muſt you go when you die? What will become of you? Where will you be found in another world? What evidence have you for heaven and glory, and an inheritance among them that are ſanctified?" Thus was I toſſed for many weeks, and knew not what to do. At laſt this conſideration fell with weight upon me, "That it was for the world and way of God that I was in this condition; wherefore I was engaged not to flinch an hair's breadth from it."

337. I thought alſo, that God might chuſe whether he would give me comfort now, or at the hour of death; but I might not therefore chuſe whether I would hold my profeſſion or no. I was bound, but he was free; yea, it was my duty to ſtand to his word, whether he would ever look upon me, or ſave me at the laſt: wherefore, thought I, ſave the point being thus, I am for going on, and venturing my eternal ſtate with Chriſt, whether I have comfort here or no. If God doth not come in, thought I, "I will leap off the ladder, even blindfold, into eternity, ſink or ſwim, come heaven, come hell. Lord Jeſus, if thou wilt catch me, do; if not, I will venture for thy name."

338. I was no ſooner fixed upon this reſolution, but the word dropped upon me, 'Doth Job ſerve 'God for nought?' as if the accuſer had ſaid, "Lord, Job is no upright man: he ſerves thee for by reſpects; haſt thou not made an hedge about him;" &c. 'But put forth now thine hand, and 'touch all that he hath, and he will curſe thee to thy 'face.' How now, thought I, is this a ſign of an upright ſoul, to deſire to ſerve God when all is taken from him? Is he a godly man that will ſerve God for nothing rather than give out? Bleſſed be God then, I hope I have an upright heart; for I am reſolved (God giving me ſtrength) never to deny my profeſſion, though I had nothing at all for my pains.

And as I was thus considering, that scripture was set before me. *Psalm* xliv. 12, &c.

339. Now was my heart full of comfort; for I hoped it was sincere, I would not have been without this trial for much: and I hope I shall bless God for ever, for the teachings I have had by it. Many more of the dealings of God towards me, I might relate: 'But these out of the spoils won in battle 'have I dedicated to maintain the house of God,' 1 Chron. xxvi. 27.

The CONCLUSION.

1. OF all the temptations that ever I met with in my life, to question the being of God, and the truth of his gospel, is the worst, and the worst to be borne. When this temptation comes, it takes away my girdle from me, and removeth the foundation from under me. O I have often thought of that word, 'Have your loins girt about with truth;' and of that, 'When the foundations are destroyed, 'what can the righteous do?'

2. Sometimes when after sin committed, have looked for sore chastisement from the hand of God, the very next that I have had from him hath been the discovery of his grace. Sometimes, when I have been comforted, I have called myself a fool for my so sinking under trouble. And then again, when I have been cast down, I thought I was not wise to give such way to comfort. With such strength and weight have both these been upon me.

3. I have wondered much at this one thing, that though God doth visit my soul with never so blessed a discovery of himself, yet I have found again, that such hours have attended me afterwards, that I have been in my spirit so filled with darkness, that I could not so much as once conceive, what that God and that comfort was with which I have been refreshed.

4. I have sometimes seen more in a line of the Bible, then I could well tell how to stand under; and yet at another time the whole Bible hath been to me as dry as a stick; or rather, my heart hath been so dead and dry unto it, that I could not conceive the least dram of refreshment, though I have looked it all over.

5. Of all fears, they are beſt that are made by the blood of Chriſt; and of all joy, that is the ſweeteſt that is mixed with mourning over Chriſt: Oh! it is a goodly thing to be on our knees, with Chriſt in our arms, before God. I hope I know ſomething of theſe things.

6. I find to this day ſeven abominations in my heart: 1. Inclining to unbelief. 2. Suddenly to forget the love and mercy that Chriſt manifeſteth. 3. A leaning to the works of the law. 4. Wanderings and coldneſs in prayer. 5. To forget to watch for that I pray for. 6. Apt to murmur becauſe I have no more, and yet ready to abuſe what I have. 7. I can do none of theſe things which God commands me, but my corruptions will thruſt in themſelves: 'When I would do good, is evil preſent with me.'

7. Theſe things I continually ſee and feel, and am afflicted and oppreſſed with; yet the wiſdom of God doth order them for my good. 1. They make me abhor myſelf, 2. They keep me from truſting my heart. 3. They convince me of the inſufficiency of all inherent righteouſneſs. 4. They ſhew me the neceſſity of flying to Jeſus. 5. They preſs me to pray unto God. 6. They ſhew me the need I have to watch and be ſober. 7. And provoke me to pray unto God, through Chriſt, to help me, and carry me through this world.

A brief Character of Mr. JOHN BUNYAN.

HE appeared in countenance to be of a ſtern and rough temper; but in his converſation mild and affable, not given to loquacity, or much diſcourſe in company, unleſs ſome urgent occaſion required it; obſerving never to boaſt of himſelf, or his parts, but rather ſeem low in his own eyes, and ſubmit himſelf to the judgment of others; abhorring lying and ſwearing, being juſt in all that lay in his power to his word; not ſeeming to revenge injuries, loving to reconcile differences, and make friendſhip with all. He had a ſharp quick eye, accompliſhed with an excellent diſcerning of perſons, being of good judgment and quick wit. As for his perſon,

he was tall of ſtature, ſtrong boned, though not corpulent, ſomewhat of a ruddy face, with ſparkling eyes, wearing his hair upon his upper lip after the old Britiſh faſhion; his hair reddiſh, but in his latter days time had ſprinkled it with grey; his noſe well ſet, but not declining or bending, and his mouth moderate large, his forehead ſomething high, and his habit always plain and modeſt. And thus have we impartially deſcribed the internal and external parts of a perſon, whoſe death hath been much regretted; a perſon who had tried the ſmiles and frowns of time, not puffed up in proſperity, nor ſhaken in adverſity, always holding the golden mean.

Mr. John Buyan's Dying Sayings.

Of Sin

SIN is the great block and bar to our happineſs the procurer of all miſeries to man, both here and hereafter. Take away ſin, and nothing can hurt us: for death temporal, ſpiritual and eternal, is the wages of it.

Sin, and man for ſin, is the object of the wrath of God. How dreadful therefore muſt his caſe be who continues in ſin! for who can bear or grapple with the wrath of God?

No ſin againſt God can be little; becauſe it is againſt the great God of heaven and earth; but if the ſinner can find out a little God, it may be eaſy to find out little ſins.

Sin turns all God's grace into wantonneſs, it is the dare of his juſtice, the rape of his mercy, the jeer of his patience, the ſlight of his power, and the contempt of his love.

Take heed of giving thyſelf liberty of committing one ſin, for that will lead thee to another, till by an ill cuſtom it become natural.

To begin a ſin is to lay a foundation for a continuance; this continuance is the mother of cuſtom, and impudence at laſt the iſſue.

The death of Chriſt giveth us the beſt diſcovery of ourſelves, in what condition we were, in that

nothing could help us but that; and the moſt clear diſcovery of the dreadful nature of our ſins; for if ſin be ſo dreadful a thing as to wring the heart of the Son of God, how ſhall a poor ſinner be able to bear it?

Of Affliction.

NOthing can render affliction ſo unſupportable as the load of ſin. Would you therefore be fitted for afflictions? be ſure to get the burden of your ſins laid aſide, and then what afflictions ſoever you may meet with will be very eaſy to you.

If thou canſt hear and bear the rod of affliction which God ſhall lay upon thee, remember this leſſon, Thou art beaten that thou mayſt be better.

The Lord uſeth his flail of tribulation to ſeperate the chaff from the wheat.

The ſchool of the croſs is the ſchool of light; it diſcovers the world's vanity, baſeneſs and wickedneſs, and lets us ſee more of God's mind. Out of dark afflictions comes ſpiritual light.

In times of affliction we commonly meet with the ſweeteſt experience of the love of God.

Did we heartily renounce the pleaſures of this world, we ſhould be very little troubled for our afflictions; that which renders an afflicted ſtate ſo inſupportable to many, is becauſe they are too much addicted to the pleaſures of this life, and ſo cannot endure that which makes a ſeparation between them.

Of Repentance, and Coming to Chriſt.

THE end of affliction is the diſcovery of ſin, and of that to bring us to a Saviour. Let us therefore, with the prodigal, return unto him, and we ſhall find eaſe and reſt.

A repenting penitent, though formerly as bad as the worſt of men, may by free grace become as good as the beſt.

To be truly ſenſible of ſin, is to ſorrow for diſpleaſing of God, to be afflicted that he is diſpleaſed by us, more than he is diſpleaſed with us.

Your intentions to repentance, and the neglect of that ſoul-ſaving duty, will riſe up in judgment againſt you.

Repentance carries with it a divine rhetoric, and

perſuades Chriſt to forgive multitudes of ſins committed againſt him.

Say not to thyſelf, To-morrow I will repent; for it is thy duty to do it daily.

The goſpel of grace and ſalvation is above all doctrines the moſt dangerous, if it be received in word only by graceleſs men; if it be not attended with a ſenſible need of a Saviour, and bring them to him. For ſuch men as have only the notion of it, are of all men moſt miſerable; for by reaſon of their knowing more than heathens, this ſhall only be their final portion, that they ſhall have greater ſtripes.

Of Prayer.

BEfore you enter into prayer, aſk thy ſoul theſe queſtions: 1. To what end, O my ſoul, art thou retired into this place? Art thou not come to diſcourſe the Lord in prayer? Is he preſent, will he hear thee? Is he merciful, will he help thee? Is thy buſineſs ſlight, is it not concerning the welfare of thy ſoul? What words wilt thou uſe to move him to compaſſion?

To make thy preparation complete, conſider that thou art but 'duſt and aſhes,' and he the great God, Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, 'that clothes himſelf with light as with a garment'; that thou art a vile ſinner, he a holy God; that thou art but a poor crawling worm, he the Omnipotent Creator.

In all your prayers forget not to thank the Lord for his mercies.

When thou prayeſt, rather let thy heart be without words, than thy words without an heart.

Prayer will make a man ceaſe from ſin, or ſin will entice a man to ceaſe from prayer.

The ſpirit of prayer is more precious than treaſures of gold and ſilver.

Pray often; for prayer is a ſhield to the ſoul, a ſacrifice to God, and a ſcourge for Satan.

Of the Lord's Day, Sermons, and Week-days.

HAVE a ſpecial care to ſanctify the Lord's day; for as thou keepeſt it, ſo it will be with thee all the week long.

Make the Lord's day the market for thy ſoul, let the whole day be ſpent in prayer, repetitions,

or meditations; lay aſide the affairs of the other part of the week: let the ſermon thou haſt heard be converted into prayer. Shall God allow thee ſix days, and wilt not thou afford him one?

In the church, be careful to ſerve God; for thou art in his eye and not in man's

Thou mayeſt hear ſermons often, and do well in practiſing what thou heareſt; but thou muſt not expect to be told thee in a pulpit all that thou oughteſt to do; but be ſtudious in ſearching the ſcriptures, and reading good books. What thou heareſt may be forgotten; but what thou readeſt may better be retained.

Forſake not the public worſhip of God, leſt God forſake thee, not only in public, but in private.

In the week day, when thou riſeſt in the morning, conſider, 1. Thou muſt die. 2. Thou mayſt die that minute. 3. What will become of thy ſoul. Pray often at night, conſider, 1. What ſins thou haſt committed. 2. How often haſt thou prayed. 3. What hath thy mind been bent upon. 4. What hath been thy dealing. 5. What thy converſation. 6. If thou calleſt to mind the errors of the day, ſleep not without confeſſion to God, and a hope of pardon. Thus, every morning and evening, make up thy accounts with Almighty God, and thy reckoning will be the leſs at laſt.

Of the Love of the World.

NOTHING more hinders a ſoul from coming to Chriſt than a vain love of the world; and till a ſoul is freed from it, it can never have a true love for God.

What are the honours and riches of this world when compared to the glories of a crown of life?

Love not the world; for it is a moth in a Chriſtain's life.

To deſpiſe the world is the way to enjoy heaven: and bleſſed are they who delight to converſe with God by prayer.

What folly can be greater than to labour for the meat that periſheth, and neglect the food of eternal life?

God or the world muſt be neglected at parting-time; for then is the time of trial.

To ſeek yourſelf in this world is to be loſt; and to be humble is to be exalted.

The epicure, that delighteth in the dainties of this world, little thinketh that those very creatures will one day witness against him.

Of Suffering.

IT is not every suffering that makes a martyr, but suffering for the word of God after a right manner; that is, not only for righteousness sake; not only for truth, but out of love to truth; not only for God's word, but according to it; to wit, in that holy, humble, meek manner, as the word of God requireth.

It is a rare thing to suffer aright, and to have my spirit in suffering bent only against God's enemy, sin; sin in doctrine, sin in worship, sin in life, and sin in conversation.

The devil, nor men of the world, cannot kill thy righteousness, or love to it, but by thy own hand; or separate that and thee asunder without thy own act. Nor will he that doth indeed suffer for the sake of it, or out of love he bears thereto, be tempted to exchange it for the good will of the world.

I have often thought that the best of Christians are found in the worst of times: and I have thought again, that one reason why we are no better, is because God purges us no more. Noah and Lot, who so holy as they in the time of their afflictions! and yet who so idle as they in the time of their prosperity?

Of Death and Judgment.

AS the devil labours by all means to keep out other things that are good, so to keep out of the heart as much as in him lies, the thoughts of passing from this life into another world; for he knows, if he can but keep them from the serious thoughts of death, he shall the more easily keep their sins.

Nothing will make us more earnest in working out the work of our salvation, than a frequent meditation of mortality; nothing hath greater influence for the taking off our hearts from vanities, and for the begetting in us desires after holiness.

O sinner, what a condition wilt thou fall into when thou departest this world, if thou depart unconverted! Thou hadst better have been smothered the first hour thou was born; thou hadst better have been plucked one limb from another; thou hadst

better have been made a dog, a toad, a ſerpent, than to die unconverted: and this thou wilt find true if thou repent not.

A man would be counted a fool to ſlight a judge before whom he is to have a trial of his whole eſtate. The trial we have before God is of otherguiſe importance; it concerns our eternal happineſs or miſery; and yet dare we affront him?

The only way for us to eſcape that terrible judgment, is to be often paſſing a ſentence of condemnation upon ourſelves here.

When the ſound of the trumpet ſhall be heard, which ſhall ſummon the dead to appear before the tribunal of God, the righteous ſhall haſten out of their graves, with joy, to meet their Redeemer in the clouds; others ſhall call to the hills and mountains to fall upon them, to cover them from the ſight of their judge. Let us therefore in time be poſing ourſelves which of the two we ſhall be.

Of the Joys of Heaven.

THERE is no good in this life but what is mingled with ſome evil. Honours perplex, riches diſquiet, and pleaſures ruin health; but in heaven we ſhall find bleſſings in their purity, without any ingredient to imbitter, with every thing to ſweeten them.

O! who is able to conceive the inexpreſſible, inconceivable joys that are there? None but they who have taſted of them. Lord, help us to put ſuch a value upon them here, that in order to prepare ourſelves for them, we may be willing to forego the loſs of all thoſe deluding pleaſures here.

How will the heavens echo of joy, when the bride, the Lamb's wife ſhall come to dwell with her huſband for ever!

Chriſt is the deſire of nations, the joy of angels, the delight of the Father; what ſolace then muſt that ſoul be filled with that hath the poſſeſſion of him to all eternity!

O! what acclamations of joy will there be, when all the children of God ſhall meet together, without fear of being diſturbed by the Antichriſtian and Cainiſh brood!

Is there not a time coming when the godly may

ask the wicked, what profit they have in their pleasure? What comfort in their greatness? and what fruit in all their labour?

If you would be better satisfied what the beatifical vision means, my request is, that you would live holily, and go and see.

Of the Torments of Hell.

HEAVEN and salvation is not surely more promising to the godly, then hell and damnation is threatened to, and shall be executed on the wicked.

When one man is damned, he may bid adieu to all pleasures.

Oh! who knows the power of God's wrath?—— None but damned ones.

Sinners company are the devil and his angels, tormenting in everlasting fire with a curse.

Hell would be a kind of paradise, if it were no worse than the worst of this world.

As different as grief is from joy, as torment from rest, as terror from peace, so different is the state of sinners from that of saints in the world to come.

FINIS.